



# Hispanic Fathers and Family Literacy

Strengthening Achievement  
in Hispanic Communities

December 2000



MH07D7205

US Department of Health and Human Services  
Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities  
National Practitioners Network for Fathers and Families



# **Hispanic Fathers and Family Literacy: Strengthening Achievement in Hispanic Communities**

**A report on a dialogue with community providers  
of services for Hispanic fathers, national Hispanic  
organizations, literacy programs and advocates  
for fatherhood**

**January 13, 2000**

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This report was prepared by the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, under a cooperative agreement with the Office of Minority Health, DHHS. Additional support for the project was provided by the National Practitioners Network for Fathers and Families through a grant from the Annie E. Casey Foundation. The views expressed in this report are those of the meeting participants and the report authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Department of Health and Human Services, the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities, or the National Practitioners Network for Fathers and Families. Information on nonfederal agencies and resources are provided for the readers convenience and do not imply any endorsement by HHS, HACU or NPNFF.



# Table of Contents

Acknowledgments .....	
Purpose of this Report .....	1
Educational Achievement: A Key Concern for Hispanic Communities by Carmen Seleme-McDermott .....	3
Programs for Hispanic Fathers: Perspective from Research by Laura Vazquez .....	7
Learning From our Partners: A Summary of the Dialogue by Lisa A. Gilmore, Linda Mellgren and Laura Vazquez .....	13
Continuing the Dialogue .....	21
Dialogue Participants .....	23
Program Partners .....	25
Federal Partners .....	29
Resource Directory for Serving Hispanic Fathers and Families .....	35
Appendix A: The Hispanic Population in the United States (Census Report) .....	57
Appendix B: Involving Hispanic Parents (Eric Digests) .....	65
Appendix C: The Importance of Fathers in Educational Achievement (NCES Briefs) .....	103



# Foreword

Improving parents' involvement in their children's lives, including strengthening and supporting fathers, is something that the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) works on everyday. It is also something about which President Clinton and Vice President Gore have consistently challenged us to do more. On June 16, 1995, President Clinton issued a memorandum encouraging federal agencies to reach out to fathers and to support fathers' positive involvement in the lives of their children and families. Since that time, HHS has initiated a series of conferences and partnership meetings to share lessons learned and innovative ideas about serving fathers. In addition, we have changed the way we view and serve fathers. We have incorporated fatherhood activities in welfare reform, child support, Head Start, and teen pregnancy prevention. Furthermore, we have expanded our research to include the perspectives of men and fathers. The Department's vision for strengthening fatherhood goes beyond financial support. It also includes supporting efforts to get fathers emotionally involved in the lives of their children.

Through our fatherhood initiative and our action agenda with Hispanic communities, we have made a commitment to strengthening Hispanic families and communities. One aspect of this commitment includes identifying ways to support and strengthen the roles of Hispanic fathers in their families and communities. Through our conversations within HHS and with outside experts, one issue emerged as a strong area of common interest: empowering Hispanic fathers to have a stronger role

in promoting educational achievement for themselves, their children, and their families.

To begin a dialogue on this issue, we hosted a meeting on January 13, 2000 in Washington, DC with representatives from community-based programs serving Hispanic fathers and families, national and regional Hispanic organizations, and fatherhood programs. We explored two questions: How do we help Hispanic fathers help their children succeed? And how do we help Hispanic fathers and families to meet their own literacy and educational needs? We began to identify strategies and to build the partnerships necessary to make those strategies work. Our aim for this report is to capture the excitement and enthusiasm of the dialogue participants and to facilitate our ongoing efforts to enhance Hispanic fathers' contributions to their children's education achievement and to their family's literacy and educational advancement.

To succeed in strengthening educational achievement in Hispanic communities, we will need to build many more bridges to enable us to forge collaborations among families, programs, communities, and governments and to transcend differences in race, gender, politics, and class. Whether your primary area of interest is literacy, poverty, health, or childhood development, we ask that you join with us and our partners to support and strengthen the contributions that Hispanic fathers can make in promoting the educational achievement of their children, the economic security of their family, and the stability and safety of their communities.

Kevin Thurm  
Deputy Secretary, HHS  
December, 2000



# Acknowledgments

There are many individuals and organizations who played an important role in the development and the implementation of the January 13, 2000 dialogue and this report. From beginning to end, it has been a collaborative process. Many thanks are extended to:

Jerry Tello, National Latino Fatherhood and Family Institute and Patricia Montoya, Commissioner, Administration for Children, Youth and Families (ACYF), Administration for Children and Families (ACF), HHS, for their advice, support and able facilitation of the meeting.

Dr. Antonio R. Flores, President and CEO of the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU), Dr. Steven Arvizu, President of Oxnard University and Chair of the HACU Governing Board, and the members of the HACU Governing Board for their continued support in encouraging the role of Hispanic fathers in the education of their children.

Dr. Gumeceindo Salas, Carmen Seleme-McDermott, Jackie Melendez and Vanessa Bernal from HACU for their hard work in providing the logistical arrangements for meeting participants and for contributing to the writing and publishing this report.

Preston Garrison, Executive Director of the National Practitioners Network for Fathers and Families, and the Annie E. Casey Foundation for providing financial support for community-based programs to attend the meeting and for distribution of the report.

Laura Vazquez and Librada Estrada, Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute Fellows, who worked tirelessly to design and organize this meeting and for Ms. Vazquez' special contribution to this report.

Lisa A. Gilmore, Special Assistant to the Deputy Secretary, HHS and Linda Mellgren, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, HHS who were responsible for coordinating the overall effort.

The members of the HHS Hispanic Agenda for Action/Fatherhood Initiative steering committee who diligently met to determine the focus of meeting and to identify potential partners within and outside the government. Steering Committee participants included: Cecilia Casale and DeLoris Hunter, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration; Jack Corrigan, John Pride, and Delores Terrazas, Head Start Bureau/ACYF/ACF; Frank Fuentes, Velma Guinn, James Sharman, and David Siegel, Office of Child Support Enforcement, ACF; Chris Howe and Mel Schmerler, Health Care and Financing Administration; Marissa Huttinger, Office of Family Assistance/ACF; Carl Montoya, ACYF/ACF; Guadalupe Pacheco, Office of Minority Health, OS; Robert Velasco, Office of the Secretary; and Jorge Velazquez, ACF.

Sarita Brown, Deborah A. Santigo and Richard Toscano, of the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans for keeping us informed and up-to-date on related activities and events. And to Michael Lopez, ACYF/ACF for information on National Association of Bilingual Education conference events.



# Purpose of this Report

About 75 people gathered together on January 13, 2000 to listen and to talk about Hispanic<sup>1</sup> fathers, their role in promoting educational excellence and what communities are doing and can do more of to support Hispanic fathers and families. It was an exciting day with old friends and new partners engaged in animated conversation and with hope for the future. The day was full of ideas and at the end of the day, there seemed to be unanimous agreement that the dialogue needed to be continued. With participants from all over the country, representing a wide array of Hispanic communities, more time was needed to learn about each others work and to build strategies for program development that reflect the strengths of Hispanic fathers and their families and the experience of programs serving Hispanic communities.

This report is part of the HHS commitment to continue the dialogue. The report serves three purposes:

- to provide a record of the January 13, 2000 dialogue held with community providers of services for Hispanic fathers, national Hispanic organizations, literacy programs and advocates for fatherhood;
- to provide information to service providers that may be helpful in designing and implementing programs that promote Hispanic fathers' involvement in child and adult educational achievement; and
- to encourage conversations within Hispanic communities and among service providers about how to strengthen the roles of Hispanic fathers in their children's lives.

This report is organized into seven sections and three appendices. After this *Purpose* section, the next section of the report,

*Educational Achievement: A Key Concern for Hispanic Communities*, written by staff from the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities, provides an explanation of why there is a need for Hispanic communities to focus on improving the educational achievement of Hispanic children, youth and adults. The third section of the report, *Programs for Hispanic Fathers: Perspectives from the Research*, written by Laura Vasquez when she was a Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute Fellow at HHS, provides an overview of what can be learned from research about designing programs for Hispanic fathers. The fourth section of the report, *Learning From our Partners*, is a summary of the January 13, 2000 dialogue, convened by Kevin Thurm, Deputy Secretary of the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and facilitated by Patricia Montoya, Commissioner of the Administration for Children, Youth and Families, within the Administration for Children and Families, HHS and Jerry Tello, Director, National Latino Fatherhood and Family Institute. Participants in the dialogue included community-based providers of services for Hispanic fathers, national Hispanic organizations, literacy programs, advocates for fathers and fatherhood programs, and federal staff. The fifth section of the report, *Continuing the Dialogue*, identifies actions taken by HHS subsequent to the January meeting to promote Hispanic fathers' increased involvement in educational achievement and to support programs that provide services to Hispanic fathers and families. In the sixth section, *Dialogue Participants*, the reader will find the names and contact information for invited participants and the federal staff partners in the effort. In the last section, *Resources for Serving Hispanic Fathers*, organizations, agencies, service providers, and

<sup>1</sup>In this report the terms Hispanic and Latino are used interchangeably. The Department of Health and Human Services tends to use the term Hispanic. Some dialogue participants used the term Latino, some used Hispanic, and many used both. No distinction is intended to be conveyed by the use of either term.

available materials are listed that may be helpful to communities designing and implementing programs for Hispanic fathers and their families. This section is provided for the readers convenience and does not imply any endorsement of the organizations or their services by the conveners of the *Dialogue*. The three appendices provide some short government reports that will be helpful to service providers working with Hispanic fathers and families. These appendices contain information on the Hispanic population from the U. S. Census Bureau; on strategies for working with

Hispanic parents and children in the school and early childhood education environment from the ERIC clearinghouses; and information on the importance of involving fathers in children's education from the National Center for Education Statistics, Department of Education.

A copy of this document is available on the Department of Health and Human Service's fatherhood website: The website address is <http://fatherhood.hhs.gov>.

# Educational Achievement: A Key Concern for Hispanic Communities<sup>1</sup>

Latinos represent the fastest-growing population in the United States. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, there were 26.9 million Latino Americans living in the U.S. in 1995, and Latinos are expected to number over 31 million in 2000. In addition, the U.S. Census Bureau projects that by 2050, Latinos will reach 25% of the total U.S. population (Table 1).

These projections are dependent upon natural growth (births minus deaths) and immigration factors. These factors may be modified by political and economic circumstances in Latin American countries, which may increase the number of Latinos in the U.S. beyond those projected.

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**Table 1 – Latino Population Projections for 1995 to 2050\***

**By number (in millions) and percent of total U.S.  
population**

Year	1995	2000	2010	2020	2040	2050
Number	26,936	31,366	41,139	52,652	80,164	96,508
Percentage	10.2	11.4	13.8	16.3	21.7	24.5

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\* Middle series projections

Source: Current Population Reports P25-1130, U.S. Department of Commerce, U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1996

By 2030, Latino youth (ages 5 to 17) are projected to grow to almost 15 million or nearly 25% of the total school population. Furthermore, Latino 18- to 24-year-olds, part of the age group from which business, industry and the

military traditionally draw their workforce, will increase rapidly, growing from 13.0% of the population in 1995 to 28.6% in 2050 (Table 2).

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<sup>1</sup> This section of the report was prepared by Carmen Selleme-McDermott of the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities

**Table 2 – Latino School-Age Population Projections, 1995-2050\***  
**(In thousands and percent of total U.S. population)**

Year	Group	Elementary School (5-13)		High School (14-17)		Total School Age (5-17)		Postsecondary School (18-24)		Total (5-24)	
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
1995	Hispanic	4,605	13.4	1,856	12.6	6,461	13.1	3,245	13.0	9,706	13.1
	Total U.S.	34,378		14,773		49,151		24,926		74,077	
2000	Hispanic	5,651	15.7	2,179	13.8	7,830	15.1	3,679	14.0	11,509	14.7
	Total U.S.	36,043		15,752		51,795		26,258		78,053	
2010	Hispanic	6,654	18.7	3,007	17.8	9,661	18.4	5,101	16.9	14,762	17.9
	Total U.S.	35,605		16,894		52,499		30,138		82,637	
2030	Hispanic	10,362	24.9	4,419	23.5	14,781	24.5	7,330	23.0	22,111	24.0
	Total U.S.	41,589		18,788		60,377		31,826		92,203	
2050	Hispanic	14,704	30.8	6,202	29.2	20,906	30.3	10,394	28.6	31,300	29.7
	Total U.S.	47,804		21,207		69,011		36,333		105,344	

\* Middle series projections

Source: Current population reports P25-1130 U.S. Department of Commerce, U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1996

For the year 1995, the U.S. Department of Education records that Latino youth made up the largest ethnic minority in the states of Arizona, California, Colorado, New Mexico

and Texas (Table 3). This trend is being replicated in many large urban areas throughout the country and most particularly in cities located in southwestern states.

**Table 3 – Enrollment in Public and Elementary and Secondary Schools, Fall 1995**

**By race or ethnicity for selected states  
(Percent of total enrollment)**

State	Latino	African American	Asian	White
Arizona	30.0	4.3	1.7	56.9
California	38.7	8.8	11.2	40.4
Colorado	18.4	5.5	2.5	72.5
New Mexico	46.8	2.4	1.0	39.5
Texas	36.7	14.3	2.3	46.4

Source: Digest of Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education, 1997

Latino youth are becoming the largest ethnic/racial student group in American schools, however, they continue to have the lowest non-completion rate from high schools. According to the National Center on Educational Statistics, 11.1% of all 16- to 24-year-olds

in 1996 had dropped out of school, defined as not enrolled in school and not having earned a high school diploma. Furthermore, while Latinos only represent 13.8% of all 16- to 24-year-olds, their dropout rate stands at 37.6% of all school dropouts (Table 4).

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**Table 4 – School Dropouts Ages 16 to 24 in the United States, 1996**  
**By number (in thousands) and percent of total U.S. population and dropouts by race and age**

Group	Population		Dropouts	
	#	%	#	%
Latino	4,481	13.8	1,315	37.6
White	21,527	66.3	1,569	44.8
Black	4,745	14.6	615	17.6

Source: NCES 98-250 – Dropout Rates in the United States, 1997, U.S. Department of Education

Further analysis reveals that the dropout rate for Latinos has not improved significantly. The Latino high school dropout rate declined by an average of nearly 3% per year between 1990 to 1996 (from 32.4% to 29.4%), faster than the 1.7 percent average annual decline in the dropout rate for Whites. Nevertheless, by 1996,

the dropout rate for Latinos was still more than double the rate for African Americans and about four times the rate for Whites, who record only 8% of their group leaving school without graduating (Table 5). A sizeable gap in dropout rates also remains between Latino and African American youth.

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**Table 5 – High School Dropout Rates for Latino, White and African American Youth Ages 16 to 24**  
**(In percent)**

Group	1990	1992	1994	1996
Latino	32.4	29.4	30.0	29.4
African American	13.2	13.7	12.6	13.0
White	9.0	7.7	7.7	7.3
All	12.1	11.0	11.5	11.1

Digest of Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education, 1997

High dropout rates among Latino school-age youth are likely to continue unless there is some form of educational intervention. If we project future dropout rates based on changes recorded between 1990 and 1996, it would take approximately 36 more years for Latinos to reach the same levels as Whites.

These statistics show that Latinos represent a growing population beset with a large segment of its youth that are dropping out of secondary school and thus, are unable to qualify for the growing number of positions that require postsecondary education. Studies suggest that these statistics can be reversed through earlier intervention in the child development process in the home and in the early education years.

Education researchers view parental involvement as the single most critical element in education achievement and success. Latino parents, like many other parents in American society, have a strong belief in education as a medium for improving their children's life chances. So while both parents are committed to keeping their children in school, Latino fathers, many times due to economic factors, have not been as engaged as the Latino

mothers in the rearing of their children. As a consequence, many Latino children and youth do not benefit from having both parents actively engaged in all aspects of early childhood education occurring in kindergarten through high school.

Promoting more active involvement in school and non-school learning by fathers is one strategy to improve overall educational performance by Latino children and youth. There are programs in Latino communities already hard at work to increase such involvement. These programs provide a variety of ways to connect with fathers – through parenting programs, employment programs, involvement in early childhood and other educational settings, and activities focused on increasing child and family literacy. Learning from the experts in communities and sharing experiences across geographic, economic, and cultural boundaries has the potential to provide powerful insights into how Latino fathers can best be engaged in their children's learning. The hope is that this dialogue will lead to more involvement by Latino fathers in the education of their children and youth as well as greater educational success by Latino children, youth, and families.

# Programs for Hispanic Fathers: Perspectives from Research<sup>1</sup>

The purpose of this paper is to highlight some emerging findings and issues in the research literature that are relevant to developing programs for Hispanic fathers. This paper summarizes the concerns and findings presented in selected research articles and in several existing research reviews on Hispanic fatherhood, it is not intended to be seen as a comprehensive or original review of the literature. More specifically, this paper: (1) examines the implications of the term *Hispanic* for fatherhood program development and implementation; (2) identifies concerns raised about how Hispanic fathers are portrayed in the research literature; and then (3) concludes with a discussion of some ways to improve service delivery to Hispanic fathers.

## Implications of the Term *Hispanic* for Fatherhood Program Development and Implementation

While there is consensus among researchers that Hispanic fatherhood is under-researched and that there is a need for more information, there are also difficulties in defining Hispanic fatherhood. It has been common for researchers to frame their studies by stating that the Hispanic population is a diverse one; yet their findings from small-group studies on one sub-population or on Hispanics of various backgrounds are frequently used, often out of context, as being true for all Hispanics. Researchers, practitioners, and policy makers are beginning to recognize

that *Hispanic* is a term of convenience that encompasses a large and diverse population. As a group Hispanics share a language (Spanish) and aspects of a cultural heritage brought to various geographical regions of North, Central and South America and elsewhere by Spanish explorers, traders and colonists. Furthermore, this language and culture has also been shaped and modified by the conditions and experiences of groups and individuals in their countries of origin and in the United States.

Because the term *Hispanic* covers a large and diverse population, it is not possible to identify specific programmatic needs or strategies from information on the general characteristics of the Hispanic population in the United States. This is true for fatherhood programs and for other programs or initiatives as well. Take, for example, the issue of language. Many Hispanics are bilingual, speaking, reading and writing in both Spanish and English. Other Hispanics speak Spanish and English but only read and write in one language, English or Spanish. Some Hispanics, especially recent immigrants, speak Spanish but having had little formal education, and may not be able to read or write well in either Spanish or English. And as is true in all languages, there can be distinct difference in idiomatic usage across geographic areas. Thus it is essential to know the Spanish and English language fluency and the language-use preferences of the specific Hispanic population to be served before decisions about spoken and written language are made.

<sup>1</sup>Laura Vazquez, principal author, wrote this overview while a Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute Fellow in the Office of the Deputy Secretary, HHS. Linda Mellgren, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, HHS and Natasha Cabrera, National Institute for Child Health and Human Development, NIH/HHS provided substantive review and editorial support. The overview was initially written as a background document for HHS staff as part of the planning activities for the January 13, 2000 dialogue on Hispanic Fathers and Family Literacy.

Country of origin is often one of the ways the Hispanic population is characterized. Based on the 1999 Current Population Survey, conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau, individuals of Mexican origin are the largest Hispanic sub-group in the United States, making up nearly two-thirds (65 percent) of the entire Hispanic population in the United States. Hispanics of Puerto Rican origin (living in the 50 states and District of Columbia) make up almost ten percent of the population, while an additional fourteen percent are of Central American and South American origin and four percent are of Cuban origin. Almost seven percent are identified as "Other Hispanics." (Ramirez). While there is a predominance of Hispanics of Mexican origin, the geographic dispersion is not uniform throughout the United States. Mexican-Americans are more likely to reside in the southwest and west, Puerto Ricans are more likely to be in New York City and throughout the northeast and Cubans are concentrated in Florida, especially the Miami area. However, Hispanic communities are not limited to these areas, there are growing Hispanics communities in many urban areas of the United States and often there are strong ties to a particular country of origin. Given the diverse origins of Hispanics in the United States, there can be significant cultural, language, and socio-economic differences between a Cuban-American father in Miami, a Puerto Rican father in New York City and a Salvadorean father in Washington, D.C.

Even within Hispanic populations from the same country of origin, there can be differences in beliefs, customs, and values that are shaped by such factors as family background, recency of immigration, degree of acculturation, regional concentration, level of educational attainment, income, and English language proficiency. Research, policy and practice must take these factors into account. Researchers point out that training in cultural sensitive is important for social service providers. The providers must familiarize themselves

with the complexities of the cultural groups that they are serving and respond accordingly (Powell, p. 90). For example, the needs and experiences of a third generation bilingual Mexican-American father may be quite different from those of a newly arrived immigrant from a Mexican farming community, even though they both live in Los Angeles and are most comfortable speaking Spanish. Providers need to be aware that Hispanic fatherhood programs cannot be replicated across the country, or even across town, without thinking very carefully about who the program was designed to serve and how well it would address the needs of the fathers at the replication site.

## **Concerns About How Hispanic Fathers Are Portrayed in Research**

There is an accumulating body of work that examines the way Hispanic fathers are sometimes researched and portrayed. Researchers have noted that the Euro-American family is often used as a template for measuring the behavior of other cultural groups. Roopnarine and Ahmeduzzaman stated in their research review, "... researchers have cautioned against using Euro-American family functioning as a basis for judging the parent-child relationships of Latino families or families in other cultural groups..." (Roopnarine and Ahmeduzzaman, p. 96). In order to study Hispanic fatherhood, the cultural context needs to be understood.

There is a need for more research on Hispanic fathers that moves away from a specifically Anglo-American view of parenting to encompass a cultural understanding of what specific groups of Hispanic fathers do as fathers. Hispanic fathers are too often judged on how they compare with Anglo fathers. Hispanic fathers may fulfill desired parental roles in ways that are not typical of Anglo fathers. For example, a father may spend time telling his children a story from a book, rather than reading with the child. However, if

research only measures time parents spend reading with their children, and not time spent telling stories, Hispanic fathers may seem less involved and less supportive than Anglo fathers.

Alfredo Mirande notes in his review of literature on ethnic families "the most persistent theme in the traditional social science literature on racial/ethnic families, is that such families are somehow deviant or defective Anglo-American families" (Mirande, p.75). Social scientists must ensure that minority families are not held up to a mold of a Anglo-American family. Mirande also writes that the past view of minority families stressed modernization and classified minority families as "traditional," clinging to old-fashioned norms that would disappear as they became more "modern," meaning more like Anglo-American families (Mirande, p.77). Ortiz adds that the early social science writings explained that, "change within [Latino] families was to occur through an acculturation or assimilation process whereby families moved from traditional forms to the more egalitarian modes of American families" (Ortiz, p. 20).

Many of the researchers point to a distinction between a "traditional" view of Hispanic fathers and an "emerging" or "contemporary" view. The traditional view is explained by the authors as one of a cold, distant, authoritarian father. As Mirande describes, the traditional Latino family is portrayed as "an authoritarian, patriarchal unit where the macho (i.e., male) is lord and master of the household and the woman is a quiet, submissive, servile figure" (Mirande, p. 59). One reason for this view of the Hispanic father as dominant and removed comes from the misunderstanding of the meaning of the concept of "machismo." As some researchers point out, the common stereotype of Latino males as being "macho" is taken to mean being aggressive, tyrannical rulers of the household (Mirande, pp. 59-60, Mayo, p.51, Powell, p. 88). This portrayal is inaccurate according to more contemporary

research, these authors note. Mirande describes the results of numerous recent studies that demonstrate that Latino households are more egalitarian than the traditional portrayal and that Hispanic fathers can be warm and caring (Mirande, pp. 60-62). Mayo explains that there are positive qualities of machismo—gentler, more caring sides that are ignored while the negative stereotypes persist. She states, "Latino males are victimized by the lack of professional understanding, social stereotyping, and the almost totally negative views held by the host society" (Mayo, p. 52). Therefore, there needs to be a greater awareness of the contemporary realities of the Latino family, instead of a continued reliance on inaccurate stereotypes.

## Improving Service Delivery to Hispanic Fathers

Research findings on Hispanic fatherhood also can help identify issues that need to be addressed by practitioners who want to improve their ability to work with Hispanic fathers and provide services in Hispanic communities. One such issue is the need to make parenting programs more father friendly. Researchers make the point that the parenting/family education field has traditionally been oriented towards mothers (Powell, 85). This orientation, coupled with the lack of information on how to involve fathers, creates a challenge for both the parents and the service providers. Walters and Chapman indicate that gender neutrality in parenting has far to go, as it is still a popular assumption that a father's interest is primarily as provider in the family and that a mother's interest is primarily as the nurturer and caretaker (Walters and Chapman, p. 86, Powell, 86). This assumption about fathers' lack of interest and direct involvement in care and nurturing can lead to what Powell describes as "ambivalence about involving fathers" in parenting programs (Powell, p.98). In the model program examined by Powell, staff lacked enthusiasm for getting the fathers involved. He writes that the program officials

felt that involving the fathers was "a nice idea but it won't work" (Powell, p. 99). Such ambivalence can become a self-fulfilling prophecy. Fathers will sense if providers see their involvement as a bonus rather than as necessary for their children's well-being. Provider assumptions that fathers are not interested in getting involved in their children's development must be changed in order to successfully reach out to fathers who do want to get involved in their children's lives, but may not know how.

Providers must get to know the needs and strengths of the community they intend to serve. This assessment will help determine, for example, whether there are many low-income, young parents without extended family in the area, language barriers, or immigration issues that must be addressed. As Powell states, the need for "preplanning is particularly critical for programs designed to serve ethnic minority populations and to include father participation" (Powell, p. 106). The importance of identifying fathers' preferred program models can be learned from a study of Mexican fathers living in Los Angeles reported by Powell. He explains that these fathers preferred a combined program of parent group meetings and home visiting (Powell, p. 93). In addition, the men valued participation with their spouse/partner, familiarity with others in the group, and professional male staff (Powell, p. 93, p. 102). Communicating that their active participation is needed, not just their presence, is an important step in making sure that fathers feel more welcome and become more involved.

Some researchers have identified a particular group of Hispanic fathers who especially need to be engaged in parenting programs, and who up to this point have not been involved. This group is Hispanic teenage fathers. Hispanic adolescents are the fastest-growing minority age group in the United States (Census, 1996). Yet, many researchers point to a lack of studies and understanding of these fathers

(Zayas, Schinke, Casareno and Kiselica). According to Kiselica, the most important recommendation that can be drawn from the existing research with Hispanic adolescent fathers is that counselors must take into consideration the fathers' degree of acculturation to the dominant society (Kiselica, p.238). The lower the level of acculturation, the less likely that a Hispanic adolescent is to use social services. Traditionally, a Hispanic father will turn to his extended family as a resource rather than social service providers. But many teen fathers do not have an extended family to depend on and they may not be comfortable turning to outsiders (that is, social service providers) for help. More research is needed on how to find culturally and linguistically competent ways of getting the teen fathers the help that they need.

## **Summary**

With a more accurate understanding of Hispanic fathers and families, educators and social service and health providers will be able to reach out to Hispanic fathers more effectively. Culturally and linguistically competent programs will be developed that take into account the complexities and the preferences of the populations that they are serving. Future generations of Hispanic families and fathers will be better served with these changes.

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# Learning from our Partners: A Summary of the Dialogue

On January 13, 2000, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Deputy Secretary Kevin Thurm, representatives from Hispanic agencies and fatherhood organizations, and federal staff met for a dialogue on strengthening the role of Hispanic fathers in the educational achievement of their children, their families, and themselves. Deputy Secretary Thurm acknowledged the support of the Casey Foundation and the National Practitioners Network for Fathers and Families in making this meeting possible and thanked the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU) for helping to organize the meeting. He then stated that while HHS has made strengthening Hispanic families a priority through our Fatherhood Initiative, nine-point Hispanic Agenda for Action, and other activities, we recognize that Hispanic fatherhood is not at the top of most organizational agendas. He noted that through the process of meetings such as this dialogue, educational opportunities for Hispanic fathers, children, and families has emerged as a strong area of common interest. He asked participants to reflect on two questions: (1) How do we help Hispanic fathers help their children to succeed? and (2) How do we help Hispanic fathers and families to meet their own literacy and educational needs?

At the close of his remarks, Deputy Secretary Thurm stated that participants would receive a meeting summary. He further indicated that HHS would work with our federal partners to identify ways to improve communications with programs to help them better serve their communities. He cited as examples information in the participants' meeting folders on Welfare-to-Work partnership opportunities and the flexibility available in the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families

(TANF) Program to fund a variety of services. Deputy Secretary Thurm asked participants to identify additional programs that serve Hispanic families to engage them as more visible partners in this effort. He also encouraged the development of an action plan based on the day's dialogue with specific steps and a timeframe. Finally, he asked participants to hold the Department accountable for progress in making sure that the programs and policies within HHS are responsive to the needs of Hispanics fathers, families, and communities.

## Framing the Issue

The meeting moderators, Patricia Montoya, Commissioner, Administration for Children, Youth and Families, HHS, and Jerry Tello, Director, National Latino Fatherhood and Family Institute, provided a framework for the discussion of fatherhood and literacy in Hispanic communities. Commissioner Montoya emphasized the importance of parents' roles in early learning. She indicated that the current media attention to the research on early brain development has increased the main-stream understanding of how important parents are to their children's intellectual development and overall well-being. Commissioner Montoya indicated that emerging research on fatherhood indicates that both fathers and mothers contribute to a child's development and that a father's involvement is not just about intellectual development but also about emotional ties, attachment, modeling and values. She noted that when a father reads to his child, he contributes not only to the child's cognitive development, but also conveys to the child his values about the importance of reading and literacy. Ms. Montoya also highlighted Department of Education research demonstrating that

students do better academically and socially when their fathers are involved in school. Her challenge to the group was to identify the barriers that keep fathers from becoming involved, the opportunities that can encourage fathers to be more engaged, and the ways that programs can increase cultural relevance and sensitivity to Hispanic fathers. She ended her opening remarks with a challenge for the participants to help government find ways to work in partnership with Hispanic communities and organizations to promote more father involvement.

Jerry Tello began by talking about his own experience with his father. His father taught him that his first obligation in his life was to his mother and that fatherhood is first and foremost about honoring womenByour mother, your children's mother and all mothers. Sometimes the notion of "machismo" is mistakenly viewed as supporting authoritarian and paternalistic behavior, but in reality machismo is about being responsible and honorable and about protecting women not abusing them. Mr. Tello expanded the definition of education beyond literacy to also include character development, that is, respecting women and children, honoring elders, and dealing with society. He indicated that in Latino culture "bien educados" (well-educated) is not about schooling so much as it is about wisdom, about knowing and doing what is right and honorable, and about accepting responsibility for the community. He described the dilemma for Hispanic communities which have some of the highest rates of fatherhood presence in the home but fewer children graduating from high school and going to college. He emphasized that father inclusion and involvement, not just presence, is important. He also noted that to date, Hispanics "haven't been part of the story, their voices have not been heard or sought." Mr Tello challenged the meeting participants to think about the difference between presence and involvement. If Hispanic fathers are already present, how can they become more involved with their children's education at

home and in the schools? What kinds of inclusion and integration by fathers are necessary in order to create change in children's lives? How should communities respond to their changing demographics, that is, the increasing number and proportion of Latinos? What role should Latinos have in developing materials for programs and in translating them? Lastly, Mr. Tello asked how the inclusion of Latino fathers could become a priority for the fatherhood initiative. He indicated that what really mattered was not the dialogue, but what would happen when the meeting was over.

## **Discussion: Community Efforts to Engage Hispanic Fathers in Children's Learning and in Adult Literacy and Educational Development**

*This discussion began with brief presentations by Teresa Gonzalez, AVANCE – Rio Grande Valley, McAllen, Texas, and Richard F. Gonzalez, Administration for Children's Services, Head Start, New York. Participants then based their discussion on the following questions: What is going on in communities? What are we learning? What are the models and promising approaches? What are the barriers? What components are missing? What is needed to strengthen programs?*

The two presentations gave all participants a sense of the great diversity among Hispanic communities, as well as similarities. Avance serves the Rio Grande Valley border area in Texas. The service area is huge, four counties cover 4,000 square miles. The areas with residential concentrations of Mexican-Americans are called "colonias." Many of the colonias lack basic services, such as running water, electricity and sewers. The economy is primarily based on farming and ranching. Many fathers work long hours and do hard physical labor, but there is also high unemployment in the area, about 44 percent. While the Head Start program in New York City also covers a very large area, it is a very urban

program. There are many different Hispanic groups in New York and these groups often see themselves having different cultures and Spanish dialects. Like the families in the Rio Grande Valley, there is much poverty and inadequate housing and homelessness are problems for some families. Initially fathers appear to be absent from the home, at least, information on the father is often not included on the Head Start application. However, often the fathers are the ones who bring their children to the program.

## Challenges

*Participants discussed the challenges of working with Hispanic fathers based on experiences in their own communities and their familiarity with other Hispanic fatherhood programs in communities around the United States. The dialogue participants did not try to reach agreement on which challenges they felt were most significant for Hispanic fatherhood programs, recognizing that importance may be specific to the community and the population being served. Therefore, the order in which these challenges are listed should not be taken to reflect any priority or significance.*

### Employment

- Physically demanding jobs make it difficult for men to attend programs or classes, too tired to participate.
- Little employer involvement/support; men fear losing jobs if they go to a class or meeting.
- Bias against those who perform physical labor.
- Tension between income-producing activities and fatherhood. Work comes first.

### Unemployment

- High unemployment in some areas and for men with low skills
- Diminishing opportunities (e.g., NYC eliminated remedial classes)
- Unwillingness to acknowledge Spanish

GED testing as legitimate educational achievement.

### Recruitment and Retention

- Assumptions/self-fulfilling prophecies, "they won't come, and if they do, they won't stay."
- Schools and other organizations not welcoming toward men - "what are you doing here?"
- Lack of male role models, e.g., school teachers and social work staff are primarily female.

### Societal Views and Assumptions

- Traditional roles, i.e., father is the provider for the family, mother is the caretaker.
- Societal view of men as the problem; men typically seen as abusers, predators, pimps.
- Stereotypes, racism, anti-immigrant bias.
- Negative media portrayals.
- When we talk about parents we usually mean mothers and ignore fathers.

### Language and Literacy

- Many fathers are not bilingual.
- For fathers, getting a job may be viewed as more important than literacy or ESL.
- Functional literacy may be low-junior high level regardless of grade completed.

### Contextual Factors

- Increased caretaking by fathers/men as TANF pushes more mothers into work outside home.
- Vast service areas, e.g., AVANCE-Rio Grande serves four counties over 4,000 square miles.
- Poor living conditions, e.g., "colonias" on Texas-Mexico border lack electricity, water, etc.
- Many different Hispanic communities (e.g., in NYC), don't necessarily need or want same programs.

## **Program Funding and Design**

- Funding insufficient to sustain programs or expand capacity to meet demand.
- Categorical funding streams limit client eligibility and service delivery.
- Literacy funding is targeted to school/literacy centers that don't work with men as fathers.
- Fathers need to create programs to meet their needs; staff and fathers may want different things.
- Relationship building may be more important than specific program design.
- Best practices not identified, researched, or disseminated.

One of the participants provided a powerful anecdotal story from his own life. His father, who was not comfortable interacting with the formal educational system, every year took responsibility to see that his son was not inappropriately placed in ESL classes just because he had an Hispanic name and lived in an Hispanic community. He saw his father's activism as an indicator of how Hispanic fathers need to expand the roles they play in their children's education. It may not be the traditional role of Hispanic fathers to go to school and talk to the teachers and principals but it may be necessary if Hispanic fathers are going to provide a better life for their children. Work may not be enough. Fathers also need to go to meetings, to classes, to advocate for their children.

## **What is needed to strengthen programs:**

*Participants discussion included the identification of the strategies that had worked in their programs in meeting the challenges that face Hispanic fathers and Hispanic fatherhood programs. Like the list of challenges, the order of the various strategies does not reflect priority or importance.*

## **Program Assumptions**

- Use an asset-based approach focusing on parents' strengths including culture and spirituality.
- Programs that emphasize that fathers are integral to the family.
- Invert assumptions (e.g., men are available); develop new mindset that is accepting of dads.
- Help men draw on their strengths; see them as a positive, not a deficit.

## **Program Design and Curriculum**

- Materials should be created specifically for dads, not just an adaptation from "mothers" programs.
- Father-focused curricula, not just an add-on to a parenting program.
- Build on the need for jobs; provide opportunities for education and job training.
- Provide flexible hours (e.g., early morning before work, evenings, and weekends).
- Meet clients where they are, e.g., home visits, take them to lunch.
- Fathers should create their own programs based on what is meaningful to them.
- Tailor program to the community, e.g., in D.C., soccer helps involve Central American dads.
- Have ESL/literacy training off-site; reduces fear of disclosure to others of problems with reading.
- Have activities that allow staff to know fathers, boys and to get to know each other, e.g., "Circulo de Hombres" meetings, drop-in support groups.

## **Diversity**

- Increase male Latino role models, mentors.
- Acknowledge the diversity within the Hispanic community and create ways of celebrating and affirming that diversity.
- Conduct cultural diversity training; raise awareness of the Latino culture and of the male culture.

- Materials should be created in Spanish, not just translated.
- Employ more Hispanic fathers in Head Start.

### Recruitment of Fathers

- Use individual/personal invitation, it's the best way to get people involved.
- Have children invite their fathers to special events or programs.
- Have dads bring their kids and physically play with them. Use sports, family activities to increase participation.
- Use transitions, such as the start of school, graduation, new baby, to plan special events for fathers and by fathers.
- Use incentives that are meaningful and supportive of fathers and what they do as fathers: games, books, toys, tickets to sporting events. Some men appreciate stipends and others resent them.
- Draw dads in with GED courses, job training
- Involve parents who have completed programs in outreach activities with other parents.

One of the speakers summed up much of the discussion by talking about the need to get to know the fathers as individuals, as people. While program design, collaboration, recruitment, are important, it is the one-on-one relationships that will bring men together and get them involved in the program and with their children. Men need to have opportunities to share their story with other men of the same cultural and of other cultures. If we want men to be more involved in family life, to see themselves as more than providers, we have to start early and start working with young boys in school about what being a man is all about.

## Discussion: Strategies for Strengthening the Role of Hispanic Fathers in Child and Family Literacy and Educational Achievement

*Participants addressed the following questions: How do we build awareness of Hispanic fathers' roles in family literacy and educational achievement? What are the available resources in the public and private sectors? What is needed to build capacity and further achievement? Much of this discussion continued the themes of the earlier session moving to more explicit examples or concrete examples of broad actions that could be taken to facilitate systemic change rather than individual program improvements.*

### Increasing Awareness

- Need media help. Need television programs for men that can help men grow and develop. Need positive media portrayals in television and movies that show good men doing good things.
- Need more public service announcements showing Hispanic men and families that focus on the value of fathers.
- Should create a watchdog group to improve the media portrayal of Latino men. The group should be proactive, not just reactive to negative portrayals of men of color.
- Need to use people who have had experience in working with Hispanic dads to change awareness in schools and other programs. Many teachers and other program staff do not think fathers want to be involved and do not know how to get them involved.
- Anti-immigrant bias, racism, stereotypes needs to be addressed. Fathers and families won't come, if they are not made to feel welcome and valued.
- We have to change the way we address

issues of the penal system. Children are being raised without fathers. Fathers in prison are often far away from their children. There is reluctance to connect incarcerated fathers to their families. Young men are deported and in prison. There is much pain in disconnected relationships.

### Resource Availability

- For community based programs, implementation of fatherhood programs is directly tied to funding. Programs can't expand unless there are more resources.
- Set aside funding for a group that can provide technical assistance and training as needed nationwide on how to work with Hispanic fathers, especially in Spanish.
- Need resources specifically for fatherhood program efforts and to develop culturally appropriate fatherhood programs.
- Existing parenting and family support groups need to be expanded to include fathers. Groups should meet regularly and be well advertised.
- In funding federal programs, conference and meetings, Latinos should always be represented.

### Capacity Building

- Focus on effective staff recruitment and training, including staff who can model desired behavior with dads (e.g., staff who read to their own kids).
- Grow our own resources, make education part of the ethos of the program (e.g., encourage staff to further their own education).
- Institute programs to recruit and train Hispanic staff (a focus of the National Head Start Latino Network).
- Hispanic men need to be pushed into higher education if programs are to be able to hire the right mix of staff (men and women, cultural diversity, bilingual).
- Direct resources at parents because parents are the agents of change.

- Evaluate programming to develop effective programs tailored to the unique needs of different Hispanic/Latino populations (e.g., recent immigrants, seventh-generation Mexican-Americans).

The following summary of one participant's comments provides a sense of the afternoon conversation: It is important to do personal development with men, don't just ask men to read to their kids, ask them to read for themselves. Kids do what they see. It is important to change societal norms. There needs to be support for mothers and fathers. Men and women need to be more inclusive. If there are only programs for mothers and programs for fathers, how do we create the modeling for both men and women. For immigrant families (maybe for all who see themselves outside the mainstream), we have to do more than work in Spanish, although that is important. We need to tell these families that the United States is not finished yet. We have not decided what "we the people" means. There is still a place for everyone. There is an open door for families to contribute. We need to ask parents, fathers and mothers, such questions as "What brought you here?" "What made you take the risk of leaving your country?" "What do you want for your children?" "How can we help you do what you need to do for your children and for yourselves?"

### Looking to the Future

*Participants were asked: Through public/private partnerships how can we help each other and the communities we serve? What needs to be done now? What should be part of a long-term strategy? Information presented here is from the discussion and post-meeting follow-up.*

**Short-Term Strategies**

- Become active in public policy, e.g., bring the voice of practitioners to the Senate as it considers a bill to fund programs that serve fathers.
- Connect with existing programs, e.g., the National Institute for Literacy.
- HHS, HACU, Department of Labor, and others should jointly conduct follow-up activities.
- Develop a smaller working group to develop next steps, action plan.
- Come back together in three to six months to review progress; what has/has not been done.

**Long-Term Strategies**

- Develop communications network to keep Hispanic programs and organizations informed about funding, best practices, training and technical assistance.
- Develop mechanisms (e.g. technical assistance) for increasing the capacity of community-based programs to serve Hispanic fathers.
- Do more research on Hispanic fatherhood and Hispanic families, including the identification of best practices.
- Raise awareness about the importance of fatherhood in Hispanic organizations and communities.
- Include a Hispanic voice in all national fatherhood organizations and conferences.



# Continuing the Dialogue

The following activities have been undertaken since representatives from Hispanic agencies, fatherhood organizations, and federal staff met on January 13<sup>th</sup>, 2000 for a dialogue on strengthening the role of Hispanic fathers in the educational achievement of their children, their families, and for themselves. Some of these activities are a direct follow-up to the meeting, while others represented related activities that continue to focus attention on Hispanic fathers in a variety of federally sponsored programs.

- Subsequent to the meeting follow-up forms sent to all program participants asking them to provide feedback on the value of the meeting and on what additional activities they would like the federal government to undertake. Comments about follow-up activities have been incorporated into the meeting summary provided in the meeting summary-*Learning from Our Partners*.
- A short summary of the meeting and information on the availability of HHS program materials in Spanish was sent to all program and federal participants in March, 2000.
- On July 19, 2000 the Office of Child Support Enforcement/Administration for Children and Families/HHS held a Hispanic Leadership Forum in Washington, D.C., seeking input from Hispanic/Latino organizations on how the child support enforcement system affects families, including fathers, in Hispanic/Latino communities and on needed improvements in services. A report on the meeting, including recommendations, is being developed and will be available from OCSE in the near future.
- HHS collaborated with the Department of Labor in developing a noncustodial parents track for the Welfare to Work Beyond 2000: Building the Future conference (October 17-19, 2000 in Phoenix, Arizona). Among the sessions was one on Targeted Outreach, that included information on reaching out to Hispanic fathers within the context of welfare-to-work programs.
- At HACU's 14th Annual Conference "Changing the Landscape of Education: Hispanics in the New Century," Albuquerque, New Mexico (November 4-7, 2000), the HACU Washington Office coordinated a publication's table that showcased HHS information available for fathers and mothers and the HHS Hispanic fatherhood activities.
- HHS is providing all program and federal invitees with a copy of this report and has made it available on its fatherhood website: <http://fatherhood.hhs.gov>.
- HACU is making this report available to its member organizations.
- The National Practitioners Network for Fathers and Families (NPNFF), a membership organization of public and private community-based fatherhood programs, is making this report available to its membership.

Other activities will be emerging as HHS implements its program and activities in 2001 and its planning processes for FY 2002 and 2003. For more information on Hispanic fatherhood activities being undertaken by the Department of Health and Human Services, please contact:

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All participant information was correct as of January 13, 2000. Contact information may have changed subsequent to that date.



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301-948-0599 (p)  
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# Resource Directory for Serving Hispanic Fathers and Families

- Community Based Programs and Advocates for Hispanic Fathers
- Early Childhood Education and and Literacy Organizations
- Fatherhood and Family Support Organizations
- Federal Government Information
- Local and National Hispanic Organizations

The information in this Resource Directory is provided for the convenience of the reader interested in serving fathers and families in Hispanic communities. Inclusion on this list does not imply HHS, HACU or NPNFF endorsement of the organizations' policies or programs nor the organizations' involvement in or endorsement of HHS fatherhood activities. Information on these organizations and their programs was obtained from public sources, such as websites and printed brochures.



# Community Based Programs and Advocates for Hispanic Fathers

## **Administration for Children's Services,**

### **Head Start**

Jack Licht, Acting Asst. Deputy

Commissioner.

30 Main St., 10th Floor

Brooklyn, NY 11201

Phone: 718-260-7083

Fax: 718-260-7079

The Administration for Children's Services Head Start is one of the largest grantees in the country. Composed of 80 delegate agencies, with over 225 centers throughout the 5 boroughs of New York City, this "supergrantee" presently serves approximately 20,000 children and families, representing more than 100 different languages. Several of these delegate agencies have formed local groups for fathers, in an attempt to increase their involvement in the lives of their children, families and communities.

## **ASPIRA, Parents for Excellence Program**

Claudia Grigorescu, Program Manager

1444 Eye St., NW, 8<sup>th</sup> Floor

Washington, D.C. 20005

Phone: 202-835-3600

Fax: 202-835-3613

ASPIRA is dedicated to encouraging and promoting education and leadership development among Hispanic youth. The ASPIRA Parents for Educational Excellence (APEX) Program reaches out to Latino parents who desire to become involved in their children's education, but may not know where to start. The main goals of APEX are to train parents to improve education in their communities and to help them mobilize other parents to join in their efforts. Workshops address various topics, such as: helping children improve their study habits, self esteem, communication skills for the home, school structure, group dynamics, parents' rights in the schools and leadership skills.

## **AVANCE, Inc.**

Gloria G. Rodriguez, Ph.D, President and

C.E.O.301 S. Frio St., Suite 380

San Antonio, TX 78207

Phone: 210-270-4630

Fax: 210-270-4612

email: grodriguez\_nat@ avance.org

website: <http://www.avance.org>

By providing support and education services to low-income families, AVANCE strives to strengthen the family unit, enhance parenting skills, promote educational success, and foster the personal and economic success of parents. The focus of AVANCE is community-based intervention that is family-centered, preventive, comprehensive and continuous through integration and collaboration of services. With a national office in San Antonio, and chapters throughout Texas and in Kansas City, AVANCE programs offer parent education, social support, adult basic and higher education, early childhood education, youth programs, personal development, and community empowerment workshops.

## **AVANCE-Rio Grande Valley**

Teresa Gonzalez, Senior Director of Program Services

1205 Galveston

McAllen, TX 78501

Phone: 956-618-1642

Fax: 956-618-1698

email: [avancecb@hiline.net](mailto:avancecb@hiline.net)

website: <http://www.avance.org>

(for discription of AVANCE programs see above)

## **Bienvenidos Family Services**

Barbara Kappos, Director

5233 East Beverly Blvd.

Los Angeles, CA 90022

Phone: 323-728-9577

Fax: 323-728-3483

website: [www.bienvenidos.org](http://www.bienvenidos.org)

Bienvenidos Family Services, outreaches to families through active participation in community-based collaboratives, affiliation with hospitals, substance abuse treatment centers, homeless shelters, community health centers, and family welfare agencies. The Children's Dependency Court and the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services (the public child protective agency in our community) refer "at-risk" families to the program as the alternative choice to the out-of-home protective placement of children. Many families self-refer.

#### **Calvary Bilingual Multicultural Learning Center**

Jose E. Vargas, Family Institute Coordinator  
1420 Columbia Rd., NW  
Washington, D.C. 20009  
Phone: 202-332-4200  
Fax: 202-745-2562  
email: [familyinstitute@cbmlc.org](mailto:familyinstitute@cbmlc.org)  
website: [www.cbmlc.org](http://www.cbmlc.org)

Calvary Bilingual Multicultural Learning Center is a nonprofit child and family education and development center with a 15 year history of quality service to an economically diverse and culturally rich community. Its vision is to be the multicultural village that raises the child and empowers the family and youth community. Serving over 250 children, its doors are open to families of different races, cultures, and languages, offering children an atmosphere that helps them reach the full development of their potential. Services provided through the Center include early childhood development, family support, school age/youth development, a multidisciplinary arts program and a state-of-the-art community technology center.

#### **Center for Successful Fathering, Inc.**

Dr. Ron Klinger, Director  
13740 Research Blvd., Suite G-4  
Austin, TX 78750  
Phone: 512-335-8106  
Fax: 512-258-2591  
website: [www.fathering.org](http://www.fathering.org)

The purpose of the Center for Successful Fathering is to increase the awareness of men and women about the essential role fathers play in raising their children and remove the obstacles of misconception which sustain the conclusion that fathers are obsolete. The Center provide Dads and potential fathers with timely and relevant skills to assist them in becoming the best Dads they can be to their children and develops and disseminates fathering information to increase the understanding of obligations and responsibilities fathers have in raising their children.

#### **Centro de la Familia de Utah**

Cathy Martinez, LCSW, Family Wellness Manager  
320 West 200 South, Suite 300B  
Salt Lake City, UT 84101  
Phone: 801-521-4473  
Fax: 801-521-6242

The Centro de la Familia de Utah follows the Texas Partners for Fragile Families curriculum in its teen fatherhood program. The 16 week course discusses parenting education, child support, decision making, education, employment and men's health. The program works to make teen fathers better fathers and more involved with their children. In addition to the courses taught, home visits are made and referrals are offered for social services. The center also plans activities for the fathers and their children once a month.

#### **Community Action Commission of Santa Barbara County(CAC)**

Refugio Rodriguez  
201 West Chapel St.  
Santa Maria, CA 93458  
Phone: 1-800-655-0671 ext. 117  
Fax: 805-349-8165 (f)  
email: [rrodriguez@cacsb.com](mailto:rrodriguez@cacsb.com)

CAC is a community action agency and was established in 1967. CAC has Early Head Start and Head Start Programs. In addition, this agency houses a comprehensive fatherhood program targeting teen fathers, pre-sexually

active and sexually active teen males, incarcerated young men, incarcerated adult men. An additional component also focuses on working with Head Start Fathers in the area of father involvement in the lives of their children.

#### **East Coast Migrant Head Start Project**

Raphael Guerra, Executive Director  
4245 North Fairfax Drive, Suite 800  
Arlington, VA 22203  
Phone: 703-243-7522, ext 230

The East Coast Migrant Head Start Project provides Head Start services to poor farm worker children, ages 6 weeks to five years old, and their families throughout the east coast region. At the present time, services to approximately 8,200 migrant infants, toddlers and preschoolers are provided in 90 centers in twelve eastern states. These children are served by 20 delegate agencies and two direct services branches in Florida and North Carolina.

#### **El Valor**

Vince Allocco, Executive Director  
1850 W. 21<sup>st</sup> St.  
Chicago, IL 60608  
Phone: 312-666-4511  
Fax: 312-666-6677  
email: valoco@elvalor.org

A component of El Valor is the Tocar El Futuro/Touch the Future program that provides services to children from birth to age five. Tocar el Futuro helps create partnerships between Latino parents, community organizations, and the business sector to enrich the lives of children in their earliest years and strengthen families by providing stimulating learning experiences and personal and educational enrichment opportunities. The program provides infant education, physical therapy, parental education, counseling and support to families with children who have developmental disabilities.

#### **Family Star/Early Head Start**

Lereen Castellano, Executive Director  
2246 Federal Blvd.  
Denver, CO 80211  
Phone: 303-477-7827  
Fax: 303-477-7756

Family Star's mission is transformation through education that empowers by developing the potential of people of all ages and cultures to think for themselves, do for themselves and to create better lives. Family Star provides a model Montessori Child Parent Education Center serving a racially, culturally and economically diverse mix of families. The Montessori Center provides a program for children ages 8 weeks through 6 years, a parent education program that gives classes on child development, early literacy, and techniques for reading with children, and a family support program where a service coordinator and a pediatric nurse provide guidance to identify disabilities and work with mental health services

#### **For Love of Children**

1711-A 14<sup>th</sup> St., NW  
Washington, D.C. 20009  
Phone: 202-462-8686  
Fax: 202-797-2198  
email: rcurrente@mail.com  
website: <http://www.flocdc.org>

The mission of FLOC is to transform by example and partnership DC's response to child abuse, homelessness and educational failure so that children are protected and nurtured, homeless families are financially stable and housed, and high-risk teens are prepared to be responsible and successful adults. For Love of Children serves over 600 high-risk children in Washington, DC each year with a special emphasis on those from the Shaw section of the city. For Love of Children strives to equip these children and youth with the tools to escape the cycle of joblessness and poverty that has afflicted so many of their parents' generation.

**Kyle Family Learning and Career Center**

Jonathan Engle  
 Community Development Director  
 Community Action Inc.  
 P.O. Box 1238  
 Kyle, TX 78640  
 Phone: 512-396-4564  
 email: [jonengel@itouch.net](mailto:jonengel@itouch.net)

Community Action Inc. is a community based organizations dedicated to reducing the incidence of poverty in a rural ten county area around Austin, TX. The Agency operates child development programs, adult and family literacy programs, community health programs, and emergency assistance programs. The program has worked with teen fathers and other fathers of children in its Early Head Start and Head Start programs. (Fatherhood contact: Auturo Benavides 512-396-3395)

**Le Jardin Community Centers, Inc.**

Eduardo Berrones, Director  
 47 N. Krome Avenue  
 Homestead, FL 33030  
 Phone: 305-245-4994  
 Fax: 305-247-7626  
 email: [berrones@bellsouth.net](mailto:berrones@bellsouth.net)

Le Jardin is a Head Start program in Homestead, Florida that works with approximately 500 children and their families. The program utilizes the fathers in their area of expertise in order to make them feel comfortable and be involved. For example, they have used fathers that work in construction to help transform the program facilities.

**Mary Hooker Elementary School Resource Center**

Noemi Flores-Rios, Executive Director  
 Hartford, CT 06106  
 Phone: 860-249-0665 or 860-722-8938  
 Fax: 860-722-8825

The Mary Hooker Elementary School Family Resource Center is participating in a project to demonstrate methods of conducting outreach, education, and advocacy among predominantly Puerto Rican low-income families. The

objectives are to increase participation in child support services; facilitate noncustodial parents' emotional and financial support of their children; demonstrate ways to engage parents in the pursuit of child support; and make Department policies and services responsive to family needs.

**National Compadres Network**

Alejandro Moreno  
 2101 N. Bristol  
 Santa Ana, CA 92706  
 Phone: 714-542-0540  
 email: [amtecolote@aol.com](mailto:amtecolote@aol.com)

The National Compadres Network is a national effort whose focus is the reinforcement of the positive involvement of Latino males in the lives of their children and families. In November of 1988, a group of Latino Hombres gathered to establish the Circulo de Hombres; a group focused on strengthening and rebalancing the role and responsibility of Hombres in their family and community. Based on the principles of Un Hombre Noble (A Noble Man), several men from the Circulo launched the National Compadres Network whose mission is to strengthen, re-balance, and/or redevelop the traditional Compadre extended family system. In 1995, NCN held the 1st National Hombres Conference on Fatherhood to promote Latino fatherhood responsibility. NCN is affiliated with the National Latino Fatherhood and Family Institute.

**Noncustodial Parent-to-Work (NCPtW) Program**

Geraldo J. Rodriguez, Program Manager  
 Employment and Training/Special Programs  
 County of Los Angeles Community & Senior Services  
 3175 W. Sixth Street, 3rd Floor  
 Los Angeles, CA 90020  
 Phone: 213-638-3084  
 Fax: 213-639-1381  
 email: [grodrigu@co.la.ca.us](mailto:grodrigu@co.la.ca.us)

The Noncustodial Parent-to-Work (NCPtW) Program grew out of Los Angeles County's Parents' Fair Share (PFS) demonstration. The

program provides both pre- and postemployment services to noncustodial parents who are have child support arrearages and who are unemployed or underemployed (working less than 25 hours per week). The program seeks to improve the lives of children by improving parents' means of caring for them financially and by enabling NCPs to take a more active role in their children's lives. The program serves a primarily minority clientele (approximately 55 percent Hispanic, 35 percent African American, and 10 percent other) from low-income neighborhoods throughout Los Angeles County. Although the economy has been strong and the unemployment rate low, job placement and retention has been difficult due to fear of incarceration for arrearages prior to joining program and drug/alcohol use by a high number of participants.

**Oregon Child Development Coalition**

Dee Wetzel, Parent Involvement Specialist  
P.O. Box 2780  
Wilsonville, Oregon 97070  
Phone: 503-570-1110 ext.212  
Fax: 503-682-9426  
email: [Dee.wetzel@ocdc.net](mailto:Dee.wetzel@ocdc.net)

The Oregon Child Development Coalition was founded in 1971, prompted initially by the tragic death of a three-year-old migrant child in a farm accident. Prior to this accident, migrant children accompanied their parents to the fields for a twelve-hour day of work, or were left to wait in locked cars. Typically there was no shelter or adult supervision provided for the children. The Coalition was formed to end this intolerable situation and now provides family-focused, comprehensive child development services to children 0 to 6 years old. The services are provided through a comprehensive approach to collaboration and partnership with a variety of private and public organizations in all the communities they serve.

**UMOS**

Ted Anderson, Welfare to Work Manager  
910 W. Mitchell St.,  
Milwaukee, WI, 53204  
Phone: 414-389-6693  
Fax: 414-389-6603  
email: [theodore.anderson@umos.org](mailto:theodore.anderson@umos.org)

The UMOS Fresh Start program is designed to give noncustodial parents a change to help low-income noncustodial mothers and fathers get back on their feet and into their children's lives. UMOS, along with its partner agencies, provides basic education, job skills training, job searches, and job coaching to encourage success in the workplace. UMOS will assist in working out a child support payment plan that matches ability to pay with the support needs of the children. UMOS also provides peer group support services as well as physical, mental health and drug and alcohol support programs. Bilingual, bi-cultural services are offered to Hispanic and other minority-group clients.

# **Early Childhood Education and Literacy Organizations**

## **American Library Association**

Susan Roman, Executive Director  
 Association for Library Services to Children  
 50 East Huron Street  
 Chicago, IL 60611-2795  
 Phone: 312-280-2162 or 800-545-2433 ext.2162  
 Fax: 312-280-3257  
 email: Eroman@ala.org  
 website: <http://www.ala.org/alsc/>

## **Harvard Family Research Project**

Heather Weiss, Director  
 38 Concord Avenue  
 Cambridge, MA 02138  
 Phone: 617-495-9108  
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 email: hfrp\_gse@harvard.edu  
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## **Head Start Quality Improvement Center**

Luis Hernandez, Educational Specialist  
 3790 Irvington Ave.  
 Miami, FL 33133  
 Phone: 305-444-4779

## **Literacy Volunteers of America**

Jon Randall, Director of Government Relations  
 635 James St.  
 Syracuse, NY 13203  
 Phone: 315-472-0001  
 Fax: 315-472-0002

## **MELD/MELD for Young Dads**

Dwaine Simms, National Replication Manager, MELD for Young Dads  
 123 N. Third Street, Suite 507  
 Minneapolis, MN 55401  
 Phone: 612-332-7563  
 Fax: 612-344-1959  
 website: [www.meld.org](http://www.meld.org)

## **Migrant Head Start Association**

Ramiro Martinez, President  
 Oregon Child Development Coalition  
 PO Box 2780  
 Wilsonville, OR 97070  
 Phone: 503-570-1110

## **National Center for Family Literacy**

Helmer A. Duverge, Family Literacy Training Specialist  
 Waterfront Plaza, Suite 200  
 325 West Main Street  
 Louisville, KY 40202-4251  
 Phone: 502-584-1133  
 Fax: 502-584-0172  
 website: [www.famlit.org](http://www.famlit.org)

## **National Even Start Association**

Scott Himmelstein, Director  
 123 Camino de la Reina, Suite 202 South  
 San Diego, CA 92108  
 Phone: 619-297-3423 or 619-297-4804  
 Fax: 619-297-9107

## **National Head Start Association**

Sarah Green, Director  
 JoAnn Nelson-Hooks,  
 Fatherhood Coordinator  
 1651 Prince Street  
 Alexandria, VA 22314  
 Phone: 703-739-0875  
 Fax: 703-739-0878  
 website: [www.nhsa.org](http://www.nhsa.org)

## **National Institute for Literacy**

Andy Hartman, Director  
 1775 I Street, NW, Suite 730  
 Washington, D.C. 20006-2401  
 Phone: 202-233-2025  
 Fax: 202-233-2050  
 website: [www.nifl.gov](http://www.nifl.gov)

## **Reach Out and Read**

Matt Veno, Executive Director  
 Boston Medical Center  
 One Boston Medical Center Place  
 South Block High Rise, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor  
 Boston, MA 02118  
 Phone: 617-414-5701  
 website: [www.reachoutandread.org](http://www.reachoutandread.org)

**Reading is Fundamental, Inc.**

Dr. William E. Trueheart, President and C.E.O.  
600 Maryland Ave., S.W., Suite 600  
Washington, D.C. 20024  
Phone: 202-287-3530 or 1-877-RIF-READ  
Fax: 202-287-3196  
website:<http://www.rif.org>

**Zero to Three: National Center for Infants,  
Toddlers and Families**

Matthew E. Melmed, Executive Director  
734 15th Street, NW, Suite 1000  
Washington, DC 20005  
Phone: 202-638-1144  
Fax: 202-638-0851  
website: [www.zerotothree.org](http://www.zerotothree.org)

## Fatherhood and Family Support Organizations

### Bay Area Male Involvement Network

Stanley Seiderman, Director

199 Porteous Avenue

Fairfax, CA 94930

Phone: 415-454-1811

Fax: 415-454-1752

The Bay Area Male Involvement Network is a partnership of several Bay Area child service agencies that are working to increase the involvement of fathers and other significant men in the lives of children. The network offers technical assistance, consultation, and a male involvement curriculum for training teachers in early childhood education.

### Coalition of Community Foundations for Youth

Cindy Ballard, Executive Director

Deanna Ouseley, Director of Operations

P.O. Box 489

Excelsior Springs, MO 64024-0489

Phone: 800-292-6149

e-mail: [ccfy@ccfy.org](mailto:ccfy@ccfy.org)

website: [www.ccfy.org](http://www.ccfy.org)

CCFY is a network of community foundations dedicated to building the leadership capacity of community foundations in order to improve the lives of children, youth and families at the local level. CCFY has undertaken a wide range of activities to create an environment that recognizes the importance of fathers in the lives of children. This work includes the publication of a monograph *Fathers Matter: What Community Foundations Can Do*, a discussion of simple, effective community-based strategies to improve outcomes for children and families.

### Colorado Foundation for Families and Children

Jim Garcia, Colorado Fatherhood Connection Project Director

1580 Logan Street, Suite 315

Denver, CO 80203

Phone: 303-837-8466 ext. 109

Fax: 303-837-8496

The Colorado Foundation for Families and Children is a private, non-profit organization. It is a state-level intermediary serving as a liaison between public agencies and private organizations or individuals. The Foundation promotes promising practices through training and technical assistance, informs policy development through program evaluation and information dissemination, and improves services through partnerships with communities, commerce and agencies. The Foundation is the home of the Fatherhood Connection Project which supports communities and organizations seeking to involve by providing them with technical assistance and training to build their capacity from within.

### Families and Work Institute/The Fatherhood Project

James A. Levine, Director

330 Seventh Ave., 14<sup>th</sup> Floor

New York, NY 10001

Phone: 212-337-0934

Fax: 212-337-0948

The Fatherhood Project is a national research and education project that is examining the future of fatherhood and developing ways to support men's involvement in child rearing. The project's books, films, consultation, seminars, and training all present practical strategies to support fathers and mothers in their parenting roles. Recent work on fathers and families includes: "The Male Involvement Project," a national training initiative that helps Head Start and early childhood programs get fathers and other significant men involved in their programs and in the lives of their children.

**Family Support America (formerly the Family Resource Coalition of America)**  
Virginia Mason, Executive Director  
20 North Wacker Drive, Suite 1100  
Chicago, Ill 60606  
Phone: 312-338-0900  
Fax: 312-338-1522  
website: [www.frca.org](http://www.frca.org)

Family Support America works to bring about a completely new societal response to children, youth, and their families – one that strengthens and empowers families and communities so they can foster the optimal development of children, youth, and adult family members. The coalition's membership brings together community-based program providers, school personnel, human services personnel, trainers, scholars, and policymakers.

**Resource Center for Fathers and Families**  
Arnie Engelby, Director  
Human services Bldg., Suite 305  
1201 89<sup>th</sup> Ave. NE  
Blaine, MN 55434  
Phone: 763-783-4938  
Fax: 763-783-4900  
website: [www.resourcesforfathers.org](http://www.resourcesforfathers.org)

The Resource Center with six offices in the Minneapolis/St. Paul metropolitan area, has created programs designed to enhance the role of fathers in full parenthood and full partnership in parenting their children. Programs include: support groups, anger management, parenting classes, family law seminars, relationship development and fathers crisis line.

**National Center for Children in Poverty**  
J. Lawrence Aber, Director  
The Joseph L. Mailman School of Public Health of Columbia University  
154 Haven Avenue  
New York, NY 10032  
Phone: 212-304-7100  
Fax: 212-544-4200 or 212-544-4201  
website: <http://hpcmcnet.columbia.edu/dept/nccp>

The National Center for Children in Poverty's mission is to identify and promote strategies that reduce the number of young children living in poverty in the United States. Recent work on fathers and families includes: "Map and Track: State Initiatives to Encourage Responsible Fatherhood" (1997, 1999), a compilation of state activities and initiatives on responsible fathering.

**National Center for Fathering**  
Ken Canfield, President  
P.O. Box 413888  
Kansas City, MO 64141  
Phone: 1-800-593-DADS  
fax: 913-384-4665  
website: [www.fathers.com](http://www.fathers.com)

The National Center for Fathering's mission is to inspire and equip men to be better fathers. The center was founded in 1990 to conduct research on fathers and fathering and to develop practical resources for fathers in nearly every fathering situation. The National Center for Fathering reaches dads with encouragement and practical tips through its nationwide radio program and its magazine and newsletter, it conducts seminars and provides small group materials tailored to specific audiences; it offers a fathering curricula, including books and tapes; and works with and through other organizations who have existing relationships with fathers or their families.

**National Center for Strategic Nonprofit Planning and Community Leadership**  
Jeffrey Johnson, President and CEO  
2000 L Street, N.W., Suite 815  
Washington, D.C. 20036  
Phone: 1-888-528-NPCL  
Fax: 202-822-5699  
email: [info@npcl.org](mailto:info@npcl.org)  
website: [www.npcl.org](http://www.npcl.org)

One of the National Center for Strategic Non-profit Planning and Community Leadership's initiatives is the Partners for Fragile Families project, the first comprehensive national initiative designed to help poor single fathers pull

themselves out of poverty and build stronger links to their children and their children's mothers. Recent work includes a 10-site national demonstration project between local child support offices and responsible fatherhood programs, and a Peer Learning College for training child support workers in the special problems of fathers in fragile families.

#### **National Center on Fathers and Families (NCOFF).**

Vivian Gadsden, Director  
University of Pennsylvania  
3700 Walnut Street, Box 58  
Philadelphia, PA 19104-6216  
Phone: 215-573-5500  
e-mail: [mailbox@ncoff.gse.upenn.edu](mailto:mailbox@ncoff.gse.upenn.edu)  
website: [www.ncoff.gse.upenn.edu](http://www.ncoff.gse.upenn.edu)

NCOFF develops and implements practice-focused, practice-driven research to expand knowledge on father involvement and families. NCOFF is involved in program development, policy research, engaging policymakers, and disseminating information. NCOFF maintains a database on research about fathers and fathering which contains information on Hispanic fathers.

#### **National Fatherhood Initiative**

Wade Horn, President  
101 Lake Forest Boulevard, Suite 360  
Gaithersburg, MD 20877  
phone: (301) 948-0599  
fax: (301) 948-4325  
e-mail: [nfi1995@aol.com](mailto:nfi1995@aol.com)  
website: [www.fatherhood.org](http://www.fatherhood.org)

The National Fatherhood Initiative's mission is to improve the well-being of children by increasing the number of children growing up with loving, committed, and responsible fathers. The organization conducts public awareness campaigns promoting responsible fatherhood, organizes conferences and community fatherhood forums, provides resource material to organizations seeking to establish support programs for fathers, publishes a quarterly newsletter, and disseminates information material to men seeking to become more effective fathers.

#### **National Fathers Network and Washington State Fathers Network**

James May, Director  
Kindering Center  
16120 N.E. Eighth Avenue  
Bellevue, Washington 98008-3937  
Phone: 425-747-4004 (ext. 218) or  
206-284-2859  
Fax: 425-747-1069 or 206.284.9664  
e-mail: [jmay@fathersnetwork.org](mailto:jmay@fathersnetwork.org) or  
[pblair@fathersnetwork.org](mailto:pblair@fathersnetwork.org)  
website: [www.fathersnetwork.org](http://www.fathersnetwork.org)

The National Fathers Network advocates for men as crucially important participants in the lives of their families and children. The network provides support and resources to fathers and families of children with developmental disabilities and chronic illness, and to the professionals who serve them. NFN offers training materials for increasing the cultural sensitivity of health providers who work with men of color who care for special needs children.

#### **National Latino Fatherhood and Family Institute**

Jerry Tello, Director  
5233 East Beverly Boulevard  
Los Angeles, CA, 90022  
Phone: 323-728-7770  
Fax: 323-728-8666  
website: [www.nlffi.org](http://www.nlffi.org)

The National Latino Fatherhood and Family Institute is a collaborative effort of Bienvenidos Family Services, The National Compadres Network and Behavioral Assessment, Inc. The overall goal of the Institute is to address the multifaceted needs of the Latino males as it relates to their positive involvement in their families and community. Through research, training and direct service, the Institute supports the development of fathers as active positive partners in nurturing, guidance, and education of their children; while at the same time, addressing the very painful aspects of child abuse, domestic violence, gang violence,

school failure, illiteracy, teen pregnancy and other related issues. In addition to providing culturally appropriate family strengthening, intervention and prevention services, resources, and media campaigns, the Institute's experts in the area of Latino fatherhood and healthy family development serve as trainers and advisors in strategic planning, program development, research and evaluation.

**National Practitioners Network for Fathers and Families**

Preston Garrison, Executive Director  
1003 K Street NW, Suite 565  
Washington DC 20001  
Phone: 800-34-NPNFF or 202-737-6680  
Fax: 202-737-6683  
e-mail: [info@npnff.org](mailto:info@npnff.org)  
website: [www.npnff.org](http://www.npnff.org)

The National Practitioners Network for Fathers and Families is a national, individual-membership organization whose mission is to build the profession of practitioners working to advance the involvement of fathers in the lives of their children.

**National Parenting Association**

Ruth A. Wooden, President  
444 Park Ave so., Suite 602  
New York, NY 10016  
Phone: 212-362-7575  
Fax: 212-679-3127  
website: [www.parentsunite.org/](http://www.parentsunite.org/)  
[CFparentsunite/index2.cfm](http://CFparentsunite/index2.cfm)

The National Parenting Association was founded by author-activist Sylvia Ann Hewlett to give parents a greater voice in the public arena. Its goal is to build a parents' movement that unites mothers and fathers across the nation. The association and its state partner networks advocate private and public initiatives that give parents practical support, inform parents about issues, and help them make their voices heard locally and in Washington.

## Federal Government Information

### Department of Education Information Resource Center

Phone: 1-800-USA-LEARN (1-800-872-5327)

(se habla español)

Phone: 1-800-437-0833 (TTY)

website: [www.ed.gov](http://www.ed.gov)

The Department of Education's Information Resource Center provides information about the Partnership for Family Involvement in Education, a coalition of families, schools, employers, and faith-based organizations, and other Department of Education initiatives. The Information Center contains information on the Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans initiative, including:

*Our Nation on the Faultline: Hispanic American Education* compiles research, analysis and testimony from town halls meetings about the educational conditions of Hispanic Americans.

*HSIs: Serving the Community, Serving the Nation* includes information about the almost 200 post secondary institutions throughout the United States and Puerto Rico designated as Hispanic Serving Institutions,

*What Works for Latino Youth* (second edition): This directory offers contact information and program descriptions for programs which address the educational needs of Hispanic youth.

*Latinos in Education* offers a statistical snapshot of the current educational condition of Latinos at different points on the educational continuum including early childhood, grades K-8, grades 9-12, undergraduate education and graduate and professional education.

*Testing Hispanic Students in the United States: Technical and Policy Issues*. The report and executive summary addresses the impact on Hispanic students, particularly English language learners, of educational standards and assessment policies and practices at the state and national level.

*Educational Standards, Assessment, and Accountability: A New Civil Rights Frontier* summarizes assessment practices and the impact on Latino learners. Topics include: the role of educators in developing appropriate testing practices for all students, including Latinos; the issue of language and testing; and how state and local policy makers currently implement appropriate assessment practices to meet the learning needs of the Hispanic students.

*Excelencia en Educación: The Role of Parents in the Education of Their Children, Community Organizers' Tool Kit* provides community-based organizations, schools, and advocacy organizations with a step-by-step guide to stage a community conference to support Latino parents efforts to secure a quality education for their children. The kit includes: a directory of education resources from the federal government, and selected educational and advocacy organizations; tip sheets for Latino parents; and other informational tools.

### Department of Education Publications Center (ED Pubs)

Phone: 1-877-4-ED-PUBS (1-877-433-7827) (se habla español).

Phone: 1-877-576-7734 (TTY)

website: [www.ed.gov/pubs/edpubs.html](http://www.ed.gov/pubs/edpubs.html)

ED Pubs is the Department of Education's one-stop center for access to information products, including publications, videos, brochures, posters, and other mailings. Many materials are in Spanish as well as English.

### HHS Fatherhood Initiative Website

website: [fatherhood.hhs.gov](http://fatherhood.hhs.gov)

HHS' Fatherhood Initiative provides program information, tools, research reports, program evaluations, and other fatherhood resources. HHS is promoting responsible fatherhood by improving work opportunities for low-income fathers, increasing child support collections, enhancing parenting skills, supporting access and visitation by

non-custodial parents, reducing domestic violence, and involving boys and young men in preventing teenage pregnancy and early parenthood.

#### **Head Start Publications Management Center**

Phone: 703-683-5767

Fax: 703-683-5769

website: [www.hskids-tmsc.org](http://www.hskids-tmsc.org)

Head Start Publications Management Center, a service of the Head Start Bureau, supports the Head Start community and other organizations working in the interest of children and families by providing information products and services, conference and meeting support, publication distribution, and marketing and outreach efforts.

#### **Health Resources and Services Administration Information Center**

Phone: 1-888-askHRSA

website: [www.ask.hrsa.gov/](http://www.ask.hrsa.gov/)

The HRSA Information Center contains publications, resources and referrals on health care services for low-income uninsured individuals and those with special health care needs. Materials available for parents in English and Spanish include: *Back to Sleep Card*; *Back to Sleep: Reduce the Risk of Sids*; *Health Diary: Myself, My Baby*; *Pregnancy and HIV: Is AZT the Right Choice for You and Your Baby?*; *Young Children Can Strangle on Looped Window Cords*; *Your Used Crib Can Be Deadly Flyer*; and a list of Federal Publications in Spanish for the Consumer.

#### **National Child Care Information Center**

Phone: 800-616-2242 or 800-516-2242 (TTY)

Fax: 800-716-2242

website: [nccic.org](http://nccic.org)

National Child Care Information Center, established by the Child Care Bureau, Administration for Children and Families, complements, enhances and promotes child care linkages and serves as a mechanism for supporting quality, comprehensive services for children and families. Information for parents

includes: *Four Steps to Selecting a Child Care Provider* (English and Spanish); *Child Care Consumer Education on the Internet*; *Reaching Parents with Child Care Consumer Education* (English and Spanish); *Quality Child Care: Making the Right Choice for You and Your Child*; and *The First Years Last Forever, The New Brain Research and Your Child's Healthy Development* (English and Spanish).

#### **National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information**

Phone: 301-468-2600 or 1-800-487-4890

Spanish: 1-877-POR-VIDA or 1-877-767-8432

website: [www.health.org](http://www.health.org)

The National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information, a service of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, includes numerous substance abuse prevention and treatment resources in English and Spanish, including the *Hablemos en Confianza* kit (available: [www.health.org/hisp99/index.htm](http://www.health.org/hisp99/index.htm)) with an Intergenerational Communication Book, Community Action Guide, Children's Activity Book, posters, stories, and other materials to help professionals and Hispanic/Latino families prevent substance abuse. The Clearinghouse also links to the HHS project Parenting IS Prevention, an initiative to raise awareness, train and engage parents at every level about the importance of building a close and positive relationship with their children. Built around the theme that mothers and fathers can and do make a difference, Parenting IS Prevention (PIP) is an integral part of the HHS substance abuse prevention agenda. Other SAMHSA materials for parents include: *How Are You*; *Major Depression in Children and Adolescents*; *Your Child's Mental Health*; *Systems of Care: A Promising Solution for Children with Serious Emotional Disturbances and their Families*.

#### **National Clearinghouse on Families & Youth**

Cynthia Diehm, Director

Phone: 301-608-8098 (tel./TTY)

website: [www.ncfy.com](http://www.ncfy.com)

The National Clearinghouse on Families & Youth is the central resource on youth and family policy and practice at the Family and Youth Services Bureau, a bureau within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Materials available include: Supporting Your Adolescent: Tips for Parents (English and Spanish), Child and Adolescent Mental Health: A Guide to Resources; Preventing Adolescent Pregnancy: A Youth Development Approach; and Understanding Youth Development: Promoting Positive Pathways to Growth.

**National Institute of Child Health and Human Development of the National Institutes of Health**

Dr. Duane Alexander, Director

Phone: 301-496-5133

website: [www.nichd.nih.gov](http://www.nichd.nih.gov)

The National Institute of Child Health and Human Development administers a multidisciplinary program of research, research training, and public information, nationally and within its own facilities, on reproductive biology and population issues, prenatal development, medical rehabilitation, and maternal, child, and family health. Recent work on fathers and families includes "Nurturing Fatherhood: Improving Data on Research on Male Fertility, Family Formation, and Fatherhood."

**National Institutes of Health**

Health Information Website

website: [www.nih.gov/health/](http://www.nih.gov/health/)

website: [nccam.nih.gov/hispanic/salud/index.html](http://nccam.nih.gov/hispanic/salud/index.html)

The National Institutes of Health operates an Health Information Website in English and Spanish that contains information about publications, clinical trials, health hotlines, health literature references, special programs and other health resources. Materials available in Spanish through this website include: Marijuana: Facts Parents Need to Know and Tips for Teens about Marijuana.

**Office of Child Support Enforcement  
National Reference Center**

Phone: 202-401-9383

Fax: 202-401-5999

website: [www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/cse/](http://www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/cse/)  
website: [www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/cse/fct/hispanic.htm](http://www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/cse/fct/hispanic.htm) (Spanish language publications)

The National Reference Center is the repository for OCSE publications and is the place to call to obtain copies of OCSE materials, including annual reports, research reports, best practices, videos, and Child Support Reports, the OCSE newsletter that regularly contains articles about fatherhood. Materials available in Spanish include: English & Spanish Child Support Handbook; Mi Familia Nuestra Vida; Mi Familia Nuestra Vida Sistema Nacional Sobre Informe de Nuevos Empleados; OCSE Guide for Hispanic/Latino Customer Service Child Support Program Description; Steps for Child Support; and Servicios Para el Sustento De Menores Para Familias En Programas Head Start.

**Office of Minority Health Resource Center**

Office of Minority Health

Phone: 800-444-MHRC (800-444-6472) or 301-589-0951 (TDD)

Fax: 301-589-0884

website: [www.omhrc.gov/OMHRC/index.htm](http://www.omhrc.gov/OMHRC/index.htm)

The Office of Minority Health Resource Center (OMH-RC) serves as a national resource and referral service on minority health issues. Information resources on minority health include databases (funding, media, research, data, and listings of volunteer resource persons) as well as scientific reports, journals, and documents. OMH-RC also offers customized database searches, publications, mailing lists, referrals, and more regarding American Indian and Alaska Native, African American, Asian American and Pacific Islander, and Hispanic populations.

**State Children's Health Insurance Program  
and Medicaid**

Health Care Financing Administration  
Phone: 1-877-KIDS-NOW (1-877-543-7669)  
website: [www.insurekidsnow.gov](http://www.insurekidsnow.gov)

The State Children's Health Insurance Program (S-CHIP) enables states to insure children from working families with incomes too high to qualify for Medicaid but too low to afford private health insurance through separate state programs, Medicaid expansions, or a combination of both. All 50 states, the District of Columbia and five U.S. territories have implemented S-CHIP. Effective outreach strategies, school-based enrollment materials, and other tools are available to help enroll children in free or low-cost health insurance through S-CHIP and Medicaid. *Child Health Plus* (CHIP) brochures with information for parents about the CHIP program are available in English and Spanish.

## Local and National Hispanic Organizations

### **Alianza Dominicana**

Moises Perez, Executive Director  
2410 Amsterdam Ave., 4th Floor  
New York, NY 10033  
Phone: 212-927-6810 or 212-740-1960  
Fax: 212-305-6279

Alianza Dominicana was founded in 1982 to serve Dominican immigrants. The non-profit agency provides thousands of children and families with educational, vocational, counseling and recreational tools throughout New York City.

### **Congressional Hispanic Caucus**

Hon. Lucille Roybal-Allard, Chairwoman  
1435 Rayburn HOB  
Washington, DC 20515  
Phone: 202-225-2410  
Fax: 202-226-0350  
website: [www.house.gov/roybal-allard/CHC.htm](http://www.house.gov/roybal-allard/CHC.htm)

The Congressional Hispanic Caucus (CHC) is dedicated to voicing and advancing, through the legislative process, issues affecting Hispanics in the United States and the insular areas.

### **Council of Latino Agencies**

Arnaldo Ramos, Executive Director  
Kim Trujillo, Special Projects Coordinator  
2309 18<sup>th</sup> St., NW, Suite 2  
Washington, D.C. 20009  
Phone: 202-328-9451  
Fax: 202-667-6135  
email: [consejo@cais.com](mailto:consejo@cais.com)  
website: [www.consejo.org](http://www.consejo.org)

The Council of Latino Agencies is comprised of 37 multicultural community-based organizations (CBOs) in the District of Columbia that form a network of service providers to Latinos and other low-income residents. Through the Council, member CBOs coordinate service delivery, multiply their purchasing and bargaining power, and share information and resources that foster the development of individual CBOs and the community as a whole.

### **Cuban-American National Foundation**

Susana Gomez, Director  
1000 Thomas Jefferson St., N.W., Suite 505  
Washington, DC 20007  
Phone: 202-265-2822  
website: [www.canfnet.org](http://www.canfnet.org)

The Cuban-American Natinal Foundation is an independent, nonprofit institution devoted to gathering and disseminating data concerning the economic, poitical and social welfare of the Cuban people, both in Cuba and in exile. The Foundation supports the concept of a free and democratic Cuba. It promotes an objective view of Cuba and Cubans, and an objective appraisal of the Cuban government and its policies. The Foundation supports a general program to enlighten and clarify public opinion on problems of Cuban concern, to fight bigotry, protect human rights, and promote cultural interest and creative achievement.

### **Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities**

National Headquarters:  
Antonio Flores, President  
8415 Datapoint Drive, Suite 400  
San Antonio, TX 78229  
Phone: 210-692-3805  
Fax: 210-692-0823  
email: [hacu@hacu.net](mailto:hacu@hacu.net)

#### **Washington Office:**

Dr. Gumeциndo Salas, Vice-President of  
Governmental Relations  
One Dupont Circle, NW, Suite 605  
Washington, D.C., 20036  
Phone: 202-833-8361  
Fax: 202-833-8367  
website: [www.hacu.net](http://www.hacu.net)

The Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU) promotes the development of member colleges and universities, works for improved access to and the quality of post-secondary educational opportunities for Hispanic students in order to meet the needs of busi-

ness, industry and government through the development and sharing of resources, information and expertise.

**Hispanic National Bar Association (HNBA)**

Alex Sanchez, Executive Director  
8201 Greensboro, Dr., Suite 300  
McClean, Va. 22102  
Phone: 202-293-1507  
Fax: 703-610-9005  
email: alexsanchez@hnba.comhnba

HNBA is a professional association dedicated to the advancement of Hispanics in the legal profession. It represents approximately 33,000 Hispanic attorneys, law professors, judges and law students in the United States and Puerto Rico. HNBA members represent the diversity of attorneys of Hispanic origin admitted to practice law in the United States, among them Cuban-Americans, Mexican-Americans, Puerto Ricans and others.

**League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC)**

Brent A. Wilkes, National Executive Director  
Rick Dovalina, National President  
1133 Twentieth Street, NW, Suite 750  
Washington, D.C. 20036  
Phone: 202-835-9646  
Fax: 202-835-9685

With approximately 15,000 members throughout the United States, and Puerto Rico, the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) is the largest and oldest Hispanic organization in the country. LULAC advances the economic condition, educational attainment, political influence, health and civil rights of Hispanics through community based programs operating at more than 600 LULAC councils nationwide. The LULAC National Educational Service Centers provide educational counseling for Hispanic students, and the Jobs for Progress program provides job skills and literacy training to the Hispanic community.

**MANA**

Alma Morales Riojas, President/CEO  
1725 K St. NW, Suite 501  
Washington, D.C. 20006  
Phone: 202-833-0060  
Fax: 202-496-0588  
email: manaceo@aol.com

Mana is a national association dedicated to advancing the status of American women of Hispanic descent. Mana promotes leadership among Hispanic women, advocates for public policies that benefit Latinas and their families, and works to improve communications and further parity for Hispanics.

**Mexican-American Cultural Center**

Anita DeLuna, Pastoral Associate  
3019 West French Place  
San Antonio, TX 78228-5104  
Phone: 210-732-2156  
Fax: 210-732-9072  
email: delunamcdp@aol.com  
website: www.macc@maccsa.org

The Mexican American Cultural Center (MACC) is a national Catholic institute for Pastoral leadership and language studies. MACC prepares pastoral leaders to work in and with the Spanish speaking communities throughout the United States and distributes bilingual materials for pastoral ministry, theology, history and culture. MACC works to enhance and improve the quality of life for all families.

**Mexican-American Legal Defense & Educational Fund(MALDEF)**

Antonia Hernandez, President and General Counsel  
Lucy Acosta, National Parent/School Partnership Director  
1518 K St., NW, Suite 410  
Washington, D.C. 20005  
Phone: 202-628-4074  
Fax: 202-393-4206  
website: www.maldef.org

MALDEF is a national, nonprofit organization whose principal objective is to protect and

promote the civil rights of U.S. Latinos through litigation, advocacy, educational outreach, and the awarding of law school scholarships. MALDEF is active in civil rights litigation in the areas of employment, education, immigration, voting and language. Its non-litigation programs, such as census adjustment and leadership training, address the means Latinos can use to effectively advocate for their communities and impact public policy. Headquartered in Los Angeles, MADEF has regional offices in Los Angeles and San Francisco, California; San Antonio, Texas; Chicago, Illinois and Washington, DC, and four program offices throughout the Midwest and Southwest.

**National Alliance for Hispanic Health  
(formerly National Coalition of Hispanic Health & Human Services Organizations  
(COSSMHO))**

Jane Delgado, President and CEO  
1501 16<sup>th</sup> Street, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20036  
Phone: 202-387-5000  
Fax: 202-797-4353  
email: alliance@hispanichealth.org  
website: www.cossmho.org

With more than 1,300 health and human service providers as members, the Alliance is committed to improving the health and psychological well-being of all Hispanics. Alliance conducts policy and research studies, operates national and local programs, and develops bilingual and bi-cultural materials.

**National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO)**

Educational Fund  
Larry Gonzalez, Director, Washington, D.C.  
Office  
311 Massachusetts Ave., NE  
Washington, D.C. 20002  
Phone: 202-546-2536  
Fax: 213-546-4121  
website: www.naleo.org

The National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials Educational Fund was established to promote the participation of

Latinos in the nation's civic life. The NALEO Educational Fund carries out this mission by developing and implementing programs that promote the integration of Latino immigrants into American society; developing future leaders among Latino youth; providing assistance and training to the nation's Latino elected officials; and by conducting research on issues important to the Latino population.

**National Association for Bilingual Education (NABE)**

Dr. Alicia Sosa, Director for Membership and Publications  
1220 L Street, NW, Suite 605  
Washington, D.C. 20005  
Phone: 202-898-1829  
Fax: 202-789-2866  
website: [www.nabe.org](http://www.nabe.org)

Promoting educational excellence and equity through bilingual education, the National Association for Bilingual Education (NABE) is the only national organization exclusively concerned with the education of language-minority students in American schools. NABE holds as one of its first priorities the training of bi-lingual instructors, administrators and other personnel.

**National Council of La Raza**

Raul Yzaguirre, Executive Director  
1111 19<sup>th</sup> St., NW, Suite 1000  
Washington D.C. 20036  
Phone: 202- 785-1670  
Fax: 202-776 1792  
website: [www.nclr.org](http://www.nclr.org)

La Raza is a private, non-profit, non-partisan organization, established to reduce poverty and discrimination and improve life opportunities for Hispanic Americans. La Raza is a constituency based organization serving all Hispanic nationality groups in all regions of the country. The organization provides capacity building assistance to support and strengthen local Hispanic groups as organizations and as service providers. La Raza also provides policy analyses and advocacy for is-

sues such as immigration, education, access to affordable housing and tax reform.

**National Hispanic Caucus of State Legislators (NHCSL)**  
Hon. Efrain Gonzalez, President  
444 North Capitol Street, N.W., Suite 404  
Washington, DC 20001  
Phone: 202-434-8070  
Fax: 202-434-8072

The National Hispanic Caucus of State Legislators is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization of state legislators across the nation, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Its mission is to organize, educate and focus the energies of approximately 250 Hispanics who comprise its membership in order to have a positive impact on their communities. NHCSL advocates for better housing, education, health care, and business opportunities in the private and public sectors for Hispanics and other disadvantaged groups nationwide.

**Nat'l Puerto Rican Coalition, Inc.**  
Manuel Mirabal, President  
1700 K St., NW, Suite 500  
Washington, D.C. 20006  
Phone: 202-223-3915  
Fax: 202-429-2223  
e-mail: [nprc@nprcinc.org](mailto:nprc@nprcinc.org)  
website: [www.bateylink.org](http://www.bateylink.org)

The primary mission of the National Puerto Rican coalition is to strengthen and enhance the social, economic and political well-being of all Puerto Ricans throughout the United States and Puerto Rico. NRPC evaluates the potential impact of legislative and government proposals and policies affecting the Puerto Rican community. NRPC provides technical assistance and training to Puerto Rican organizations. A nonprofit organization, NRPC is funded by contributions, foundations and corporate grants.

**The Puerto Rican Family Institute**  
Maria Elena Girone, National Executive Director  
145 West 15<sup>th</sup> Street  
New York, NY 10011  
Phone: 212-924-6320

Since 1960 the Puerto Rican Family Institute has been serving the Hispanic community of New York City in child placement prevention, mental health, residential services, education and research. The non-profit organization is dedicated to preserving and strengthening Puerto Rican and Hispanic families and individuals through the provision of bilingual, multicultural human and social services.

**National Puerto Rican Forum, Inc. (NPRF)**  
Mala B. Thakur, Director of Public Policy  
31 E. 32<sup>nd</sup> St., 4<sup>th</sup> Floor  
New York, NY 10016-5536  
Phone: 212-685-2311  
Fax: 212-685-2349  
website: [www.nprf.org](http://www.nprf.org)

NPRF is a nonprofit organization that strives to advance the socioeconomic conditions of Latinos and other disadvantaged groups through programs, research, advocacy and direct services in education, economic development, job training and placement. The Forum offers programs in Chicago, Illinois as well as the Bronx and Manhattan in New York. NPRF is a member of the Hispanic Association on Corporate Responsibility, the National Hispanic Leadership Agenda and various other groups working to increase Latino participation in the public and private sectors. 1999 marks the Forum's 42nd year of service. The organization will continue to present a national series of symposia on public policy topics related to workforce development in America.

**Puerto Rican Legal Defense & Education****Fund (PRLDEF)**

Minerva Delgado, Senior Policy Analyst

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email: minerva\_delgado@PRLDEF.org

PRLDEF is a national civil rights organization, exists to ensure that every Puerto Rican and other Latino is guaranteed the opportunity to succeed. Through litigation, advocacy and creative legal education programs, PRLDEF strives to secure and protect the political, economic, social and legal rights of its community.

**U.S. Hispanic Chamber of Commerce****(USHCC)**

George Herrera, President and CEO

2175 K St., Suite 100

Washington, D.C. 20037

Phone: 202-842-1212

Fax: 202-842-3221

website: [www.ushcc.com](http://www.ushcc.com)

The U.S. Hispanic Chamber of Commerce (USHCC) is the leading organized business group in the nation promoting Hispanic economic interests. USHCC's primary goal is to represent the interests of more than one million Hispanic-owned businesses in the United States. USHCC is the umbrella organization that actively promotes the economic development and advancement of Hispanic entrepreneurs.

# Appendix A

## The Hispanic Population in the United States (Census, 1999)



# The Hispanic Population in the United States

## Population Characteristics

This report provides statistics on the civilian noninstitutional Hispanic population of the United States, based on the March 1999 Current Population Survey (CPS).<sup>1</sup> Data are presented for the total Latino population and for specific ethnicities, such as Mexican, Puerto Rican, and Cuban origin.<sup>2</sup> Comparable data for the overall population and the non-Hispanic White population are also included. The social and economic characteristics presented are educational attainment, employment status, marital and family composition, and poverty status.<sup>3</sup>

### Population Size and Composition

#### One of nine people in the United States is of Hispanic Origin.

The March 1999 estimate of the Hispanic population in the United States was 31.7 million or 11.7 percent of the total

<sup>1</sup>The population universe in the March 1999 CPS is the civilian noninstitutional population of the United States and members of the Armed Forces in the United States living off post or with their families on post, but excludes all other members of the Armed Forces.

<sup>2</sup>Hispanics may be of any race. In addition, being of a particular origin (such as Mexican) is determined by the respondent; some were born in Mexico, while others are of that heritage. Finally, the terms "Hispanic" and "Latino" are used interchangeably in this report to reflect the new terminology in the standards issued by the Office of Management and Budget in 1997 that are to be implemented by January 1, 2003.

(For more information, please refer to "Revisions to the Standards for the Classification of Federal Data on Race and Ethnicity," Federal Register, Vol. 62, No. 280, October 30, 1997, pp. 58782-58790).

<sup>3</sup>Data on poverty in this report refers to the calendar year before the survey. For example, income information collected in March 1999 refers to calendar year 1998.

March  
1999

Issued February 2000

P20-527

## Current Population Reports

By Roberto R. Ramirez

population.<sup>4</sup> Nearly two-thirds of all Hispanics were of Mexican origin (65.2 percent). People of Puerto Rican origin accounted for 9.6 percent of the total Hispanic population, while people of Cuban origin, Central and South American origin, and Other Hispanics each accounted for 4.3 percent, 14.3 percent, and 6.6 percent, respectively (see Figure 1).

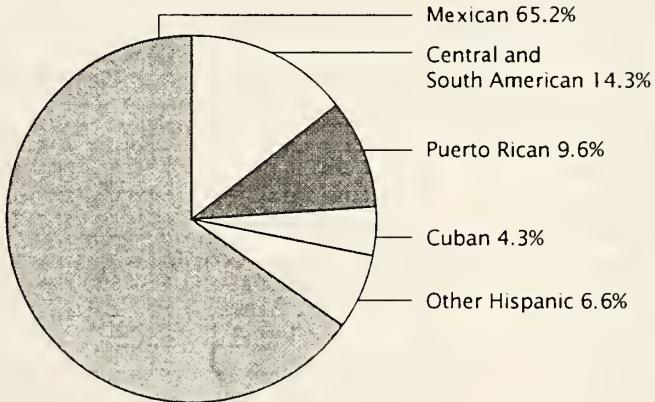
### Educational Attainment

#### Hispanics are less likely to have a high school diploma than non-Hispanic Whites.

In March 1999, 27.8 percent of Hispanics 25 years of age and older had less than a 9<sup>th</sup> grade education, 56.1 percent had a high school diploma or more, and about 10.9 percent had graduated from college

<sup>4</sup>Puerto Rico is not included in the Current Population Survey.

Figure 1.  
**Hispanics, by Type of Origin: 1999**



Source: Current Population Survey, March 1999.

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with a bachelor's degree or more. In comparison, about 4.5 percent of non-Hispanic Whites had less than a 9<sup>th</sup> grade education, 87.7 percent had a high school diploma or more, and 27.7 percent had a bachelor's degree or more.

Among Latino groups, people of Mexican origin had the lowest proportion with a high school diploma or more (49.7 percent), compared with Puerto Ricans (63.9 percent), Cubans (70.3 percent); Central and South Americans (64.0 percent), and Other Hispanics (71.1 percent). On the other hand, Cubans had the highest proportion of people with a bachelor's degree or more (24.8 percent), compared with 7.1 percent for Mexicans, 11.1 percent for Puerto Ricans, 18.0 percent for Central and South Americans, and finally, 15.0 percent for Other Hispanics (see Figure 2).<sup>5</sup>

## Employment Characteristics

### Over seven in ten Latino men are in the Civilian Labor Force.

The civilian labor force participation rate in March 1999 of Hispanic people 16 years and older is not significantly different from that of non-Hispanic Whites (67.0 percent compared with 67.1 percent).<sup>6</sup> Hispanic men, however, were engaged in the labor force at a higher rate

<sup>5</sup>The percentages of Puerto Ricans and Central and South Americans with a high school diploma or more were not significantly different from each other. In addition, the percentages of Cubans and Other Hispanics with a high school diploma or more were not significantly different from each other. Finally, the percentages of Other Hispanics and Central and South Americans with a bachelor's degree or more were not significantly different from each other.

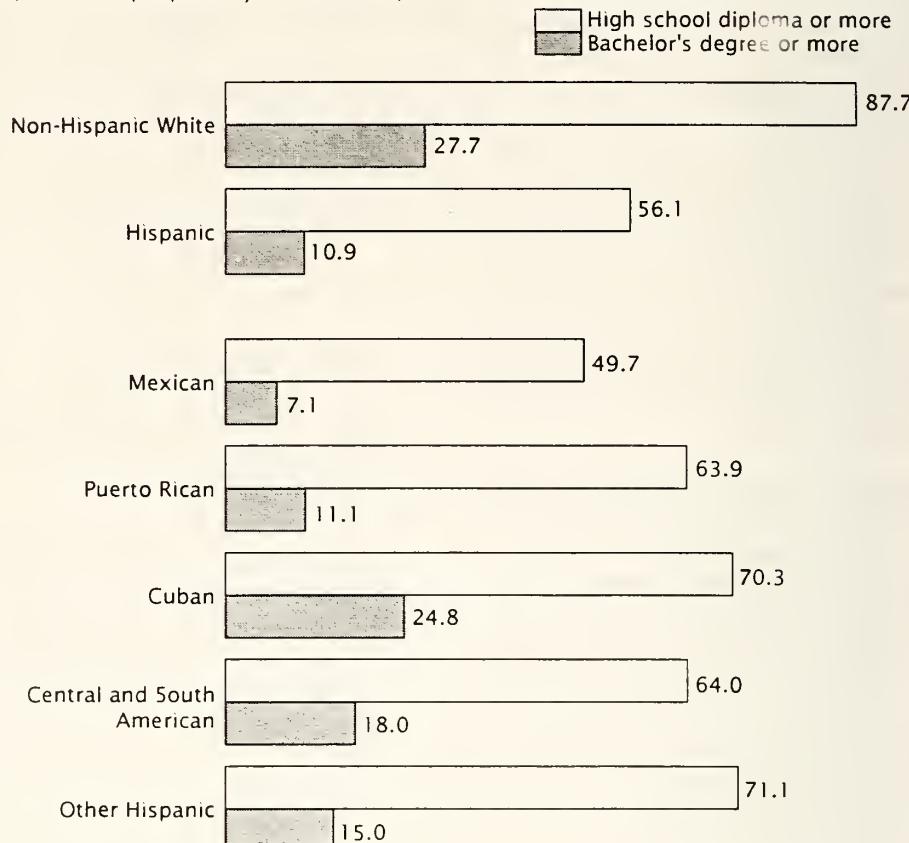
<sup>6</sup>Civilian labor force data shown in this report reflect characteristics of the civilian noninstitutional population for March 1999 and are not adjusted for seasonal changes. Data released by the Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, may not agree entirely with data shown in this report because of differences in methodological procedures and their seasonal adjustment of the data.

than non-Hispanic White men (78.4 percent compared with 74.3 percent). In contrast, Hispanic women participated in the labor

force at a rate lower than non-Hispanic White women (55.8 percent compared with 60.3 percent, as shown in Figure 3).

Figure 2.  
**Educational Attainment: March 1999**

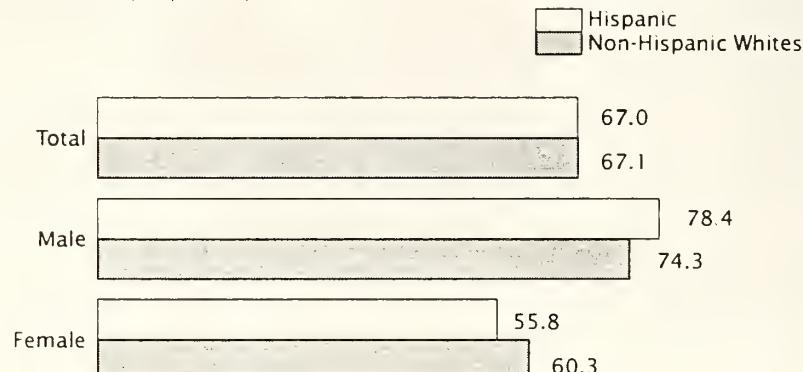
(Percent of people 25 years and over)



Source: Current Population Survey, March 1999.

Figure 3.  
**Labor Force Participation: March 1999**

(Percent of people 16 years and over)



Source: Current Population Survey, March 1999.

## **Hispanics are more likely to be unemployed than non-Hispanic Whites.**

In March 1999, the unemployment rate for Hispanics 16 years of age and older in the civilian labor force was 6.7 percent, compared with 3.6 percent for non-Hispanic Whites. The unemployment rates for Hispanic men and women were higher than for non-Hispanic Whites — 6.0 percent compared

with 3.8 percent for men and 7.6 percent compared with 3.3 percent for women.

## **Marital Status and Family Composition**

### **Latinos are less likely to be married than non-Hispanic Whites.**

The marital status of Hispanics, 15 years of age and older in March

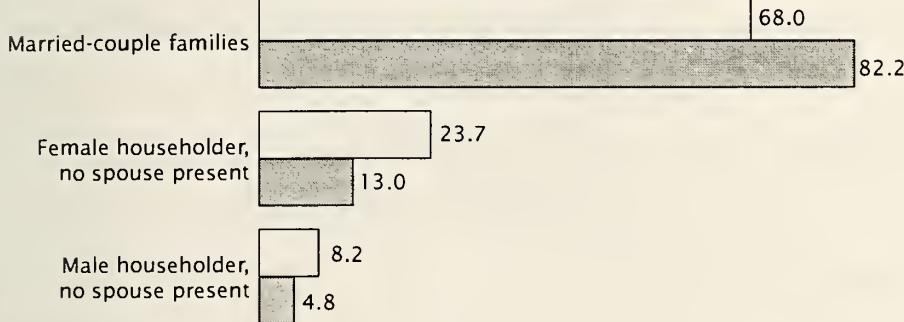
1999, differed from that of non-Hispanic Whites. Hispanics were more likely than non-Hispanic Whites to be never married (33.9 percent compared with 24.4 percent). In addition, Hispanics were less likely than non-Hispanic Whites to be married<sup>7</sup> (55.3 percent compared with 59.2 percent), widowed (3.7 percent compared with 6.8 percent), or divorced (7.1 percent compared with 9.6 percent).

Figure 4.

### **Type of Family by Hispanic Origin: March 1999**

(In percent)

■ Hispanic  
■ Non-Hispanic Whites



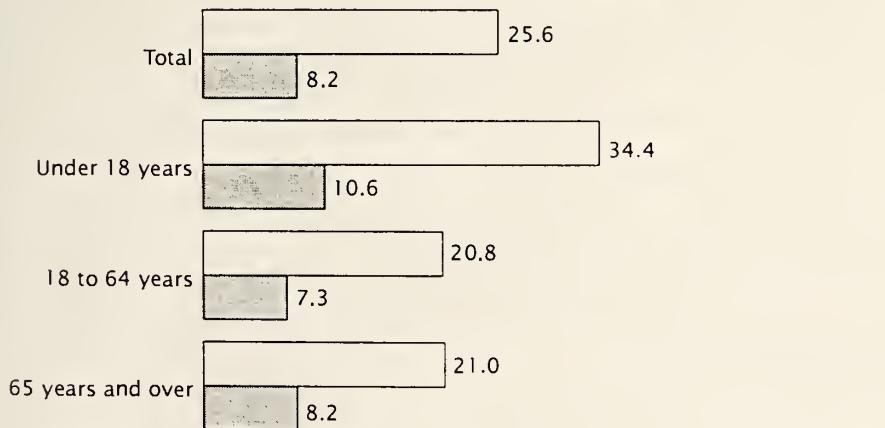
Source: Current Population Survey, March 1999.

Figure 5.

### **People Below the Poverty Level: 1998**

(Percent of total\*)

■ Hispanic  
■ Non-Hispanic Whites



\*Excludes unrelated individuals under 15 years.

Source: Current Population Survey, March 1999.

## **Hispanic families are more likely than non-Hispanic White families to have a female householder with no spouse present.**

The composition of Hispanic families also differed from that of non-Hispanic White families in March 1999. About 68.0 percent of Hispanic families were married-couple families, compared with 82.2 percent of non-Hispanic White families. Families maintained by a female householder with no spouse present represented 23.7 percent of all Hispanic families, compared with 13.0 percent of non-Hispanic White families. Families maintained by a male householder with no spouse present represented about 8.2 percent of Hispanic families, compared with 4.8 percent of non-Hispanic White families (see Figure 4).

## **Poverty**

### **Poverty is three times as common among Hispanics as among non-Hispanic Whites.**

Based on 1998 income figures, people of Hispanic origin were three times as likely as non-Hispanic Whites to be living below the poverty level (25.6 percent compared with 8.2 percent, as shown in Figure 5). People of

<sup>\*</sup>Includes both "spouse absent" and "separated."

Hispanic origin represented about 11.7 percent of the total population but constituted 23.4 percent of all people living in poverty. Of all Latino people in poverty, about one-half were children under 18 (47.5 percent); 48.0 percent were between the ages of 18 and 64 years, while about 4.4 percent were 65 years and over.<sup>8</sup>

Among Latino groups, the poverty rate ranged from 30.9 percent among Puerto Ricans to 13.6 percent among Cubans.<sup>9</sup> Cubans had the lowest poverty rate among all the Hispanic groups.

#### **Latino children are more likely to be living in poverty than non-Hispanic White children.**

Based on 1998 income figures, 34.4 percent of Hispanic children under 18 years of age were living in poverty, compared with only 10.6 percent of non-Hispanic White children (see Figure 6). Hispanic children represented 15.7 percent of all children in the United States but constituted over one-fourth (28.5 percent) of all children in poverty.

#### **Hispanic families are more likely than non-Hispanic White families to be living below the poverty level.**

Based on 1998 income figures, Hispanic families were more than three times as likely to be living in poverty as non-Hispanic White families (22.7 percent compared with 6.1 percent).

<sup>8</sup>The poverty rates of Hispanics under 18 and of Hispanics ages 18 to 64 were not significantly different from each other.

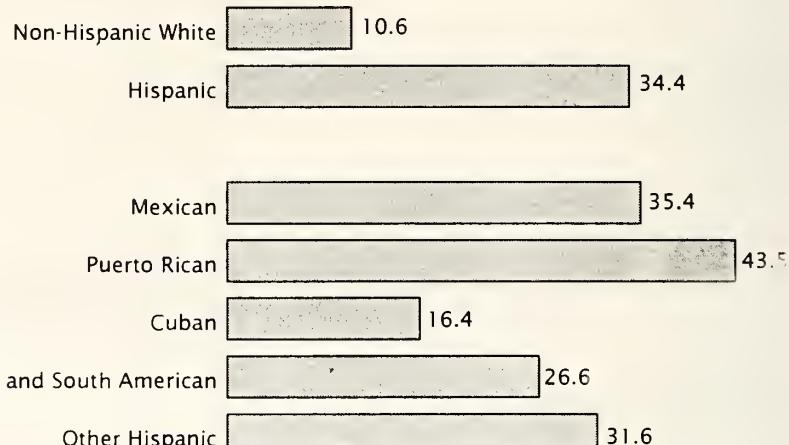
<sup>9</sup>The percentages of Puerto Ricans and Mexicans in poverty were not significantly different from each other.

Among Latino groups, the poverty rate ranged from 26.7 percent among Puerto Rican families to 11.0 percent among Cuban families. Still, the poverty rate of Cuban families was about twice as

high as that of non-Hispanic White families (see Figure 7).<sup>10</sup>

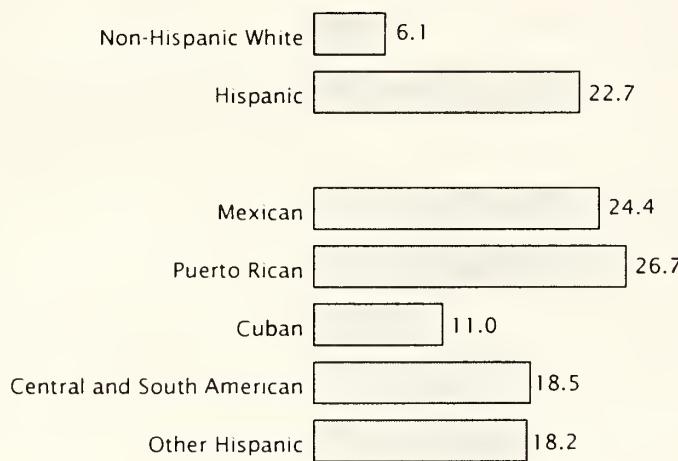
<sup>10</sup>The poverty rates for Mexican families and Puerto Rican families were not significantly different from each other. In addition, the poverty rates for Central and South American families and families of Other Hispanic origin were not significantly different from each other.

**Figure 6.**  
**Children Below the Poverty Level: 1998**  
(Percent of people under age 18\*)



\*Excludes unrelated individuals under 15 years.  
Source: Current Population Survey, March 1999.

**Figure 7.**  
**Families Below the Poverty Level: 1998**  
(Percent of families\*)



\*Includes families in group quarters.  
Source: Current Population Survey, March 1999.

## **Source of the Data**

All of the estimates in this report come from data obtained in March 1999 by the Current Population Survey (CPS). The Census Bureau conducts the CPS every month, although these data are collected only in March.

## **Accuracy of the Estimates**

Statistics from sample surveys are subject to sampling and nonsampling error. All comparisons presented in this report have taken sampling error into account and meet the Census Bureau's standards for statistical significance. Nonsampling errors in surveys may be attributed to a variety of sources, such as how the survey was designed, how respondents interpret questions, how able and willing respondents are to provide correct answers, and how accurately answers are coded and classified. The Census Bureau employs quality control procedures throughout the production process — including the overall design of surveys, testing the wording of questions, review of the work of interviewers and coders, and statistical review of reports.

The CPS employs ratio estimation, whereby sample estimates are adjusted to independent estimates of the national population by age, race, sex, and Hispanic origin.

This weighting partially corrects for bias due to undercoverage, but how it affects different variables in the survey is not precisely known. Moreover, biases may also be present when people who are missed in the survey differ from those interviewed in ways other than the categories used in weighting (age, race, sex, and Hispanic origin). All of these considerations affect comparisons across different surveys or data sources.

For further information on statistical standards and the computation and use of standard errors, contact John M. Finamore of the Demographic Statistical Methods Division on the Internet at [dsmd\\_s&a@ccmail.census.gov](mailto:dsmd_s&a@ccmail.census.gov).

## **More Information**

Sixteen detailed tables from the 1999 March CPS are available on the Internet, at the Census Bureau's World Wide Web site ([www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)). Once on the site, click on Subjects A-Z, select 'H,' then select 'Hispanic Origin.' From the Hispanic origin page, select '1999 March CPS' and then choose from the list of options.

A paper version of these tables is available as PPL-124 for \$24.30. To receive a paper copy, send your request for "PPL-124, The Hispanic Population in the United States: March 1999," along with a check or

money order in the amount of \$24.30 payable to Commerce-Census-88-00-9010, to U.S. Department of Commerce, U.S. Census Bureau, P.O. Box 277943, Atlanta, GA 30384-7943, or call our Statistical Information Office on 301-457-2422. A copy of these tables will be made available to any existing Current Population Report P20 subscriber without charge, provided that the request is made within 3 months of the issue date of this report.

## **Contact**

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## **User Comments**

The Census Bureau welcomes the comments and advice of data and report users. If you have any suggestions or comments, please write to:

Chief, Population Division  
U.S. Census Bureau  
Washington, DC 20233

or send e-mail to:  
[pop@census.gov](mailto:pop@census.gov)



# Appendix B

- **Increasing the School Involvement of Hispanic Parents**
- **Forging Partnerships Between Mexican American Parents and the Schools**
- **Hispanic Parents Involvement in Early Childhood Programs**
- **Hispanic Preschool Education: An Important Opportunity**
- **Latino Families: Getting Involved in Your Children's Education**
- **Promoting Reading Among Mexican American Children**



Number 80, August 1992

EDO-UD-92-3

ISSN 0889-8049

## INCREASING THE SCHOOL INVOLVEMENT OF HISPANIC PARENTS

**Morton Inger**  
**ERIC Clearinghouse on Urban Education**

This digest is largely based on *Together Is Better: Building Strong Partnerships Between Schools and Hispanic Parents* (1990), written by Siobhan Nicolau and Carmen Lydia Ramos, and published by the Hispanic Policy Development Project, Inc. (HPDC). A 1998 edition of the publication and a companion parents' booklet (in English and Spanish) describing the differences between schools in the U.S. and most schools in Latin American students' countries of origin, are available from HPDC, 1001 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Suite 538, Washington, DC 20036, 202/822-8414.

The importance of family structure and support for extended families remains strong among Hispanics in the U.S. despite news reports about the decline of the traditional family in general. At home, Hispanic children are usually nurtured with great care by a large number of relatives. Often, however, family members don't extend their caregiving role into their children's schools; they are reluctant to become involved in either their children's education or in school activities. In the case of poor Hispanic parents, interactions with school range from low to nonexistent (Nicolau & Ramos, 1990).

There is considerable evidence that parent involvement leads to improved student achievement, better school attendance, and reduced dropout rates, and that these improvements occur regardless of the economic, racial, or cultural background of the family (Flaxman & Inger, 1991). Thus, given that 40 percent of Hispanic children are living in poverty, that Hispanics are the most under-educated major segment of the U.S. population, and that many Hispanic children enter kindergarten seriously lacking in language development and facility, regardless of whether they are bilingual, speak only English, or speak only Spanish, the need to increase the involvement of Hispanic parents in their children's schools is crucial.

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## Schools and Hispanics: Separated by Social Barriers

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In Hispanics' countries of origin, the roles of parents and schools were sharply divided. Many low-income Hispanic parents view the U.S. school system as "a bureaucracy governed by educated non-Hispanics whom they have no right to question" (Nicolau & Ramos, 1990, p. 13). Many school administrators and teachers misread the reserve, the non-confrontational manners, and the non-involvement of Hispanic parents to mean that they are uncaring about their children's education--and this misperception has led to a cycle of mutual mistrust and suspicion between poor Hispanic parents and school personnel.

Many schools have unconsciously erected barriers to Hispanic parents, adopting a paternalistic or condescending attitude toward them. In some cases, parent-teacher organizations meet during working hours, and material sent home is in English only. Few teachers or administrators are offered guidance or training to help them understand and reach out to Hispanic parents, and school personnel rarely speak Spanish. Less than three percent of the nation's elementary school teachers, less than two percent of secondary teachers, and only two percent of other school personnel are Hispanic (Orum & Navarette, 1990).

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## The Hispanic Family: An Untapped Resource

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One step that schools can take is to understand and tap into an important and underutilized source of strength--the Hispanic extended family. Aunts, uncles, grandparents, cousins, godparents, and even friends all play a role in reinforcing family values and rearing children. This is a resource that schools can and should draw on.

With budget cuts affecting virtually every school district in the country, public schools have turned to parents for help. Parents keep school libraries open, raise funds for computers and playground equipment, and, at some schools, even pay out of their own pockets to continue before-school and after-school enrichment programs. Although worthwhile, these efforts raise troubling questions: "[W]hat happens to schools in which parents do not have enough money to compensate for the system's failings?" (Chira, 1992). And what happens at schools where Hispanic parents are not involved and therefore are not available to supplement the school's staff? Does this put their children at an increased competitive disadvantage? Budget crises thus reinforce the urgency for schools to break down the barriers between them and Hispanic families.

Through expanded outreach efforts, a budget crisis could be an opportunity to bring Hispanic family members into the school. Even if the parents are working and cannot volunteer their time, other available family members could serve as a pool of potential volunteers. If the schools need their help, and if this need is made clear, Hispanic family

members are more likely to feel welcome, useful, and respected, and this participation could lead to a fuller involvement with the school.

But the need for schools to work with what Delgado (1992) calls the "natural support systems" of Hispanics--e.g., the extended family, neighborhood mutual-help groups, community based organizations--goes beyond the short-term exigencies of a budget crisis. By working with these natural support systems and not insisting on meeting only with the nuclear family, schools can draw poor Hispanic families into the system.

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### **Removing the Barriers**

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Some educators, community groups, and government agencies are working to develop ways to encourage greater participation by low-income, non-English-speaking parents. Some school districts now employ a range of special training programs to help parents build self-esteem, improve their communication skills, and conduct activities that will improve their children's study habits. Within the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Elementary and Secondary Education (OESE), Project Even Start provides assistance to instructional programs that combine adult literacy outreach with training to enable parents to support the educational growth of their children. In the private sphere, many Hispanic organizations have undertaken a variety of projects to improve the relationship between schools and poor Hispanic families. For example, the Hispanic Policy Development Project (HPDP) conducted a nationwide grant program to promote and test strategies to increase Hispanic parental involvement in the schooling of their children. And the National Council of La Raza (NCLR) runs a series of demonstration projects, called Project EXCEL, that combine tutoring and enrichment programs for Hispanic children with training seminars for parents.

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### **Recommendations**

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The following recommendations are based on what has been learned from the efforts of educators and community groups to improve Hispanic parent involvement.

Programs that increase and retain the involvement of Hispanic parents follow a simple, basic rule: they make it easy for parents to participate. In Detroit's Effective Parenting Skills Program, for example, programs and materials are bilingual, baby-sitting is provided, there are no fees, and times and locations of meetings are arranged for the convenience of the parents (Linn, 1990, cited in Flaxman & Inger, 1991). Other programs provide interpreters and transportation.

Outreach efforts require extra staff. They take considerable time and cannot be handled by a regular staff person with an already full job description. Also, successful outreach is

organized by people who have volunteered, not by people who have been assigned to the job.

Hispanic parents need to be allowed to become involved with the school community at their own pace. As the Hispanic Policy Development Project (HPDP) learned, "All the schools that felt that poor Hispanic parents should begin their involvement by joining the existing parents' organizations failed" (Nicolau & Ramos, 1990, p. 18). Before they join existing parent organizations, Hispanic parents want to acquire the skills and the confidence to contribute as equals.

The hardest part of building a partnership with low-income Hispanic parents is getting parents to the first meeting. HPDP found that impersonal efforts--letters, flyers, announcements at church services or on local radio or TV--were largely ineffective, even when these efforts were in Spanish. The only successful approach is personal: face-to-face conversations with parents in their primary language in their homes.

Home visits not only personalize the invitations but help school staff to understand and deal with parents' concerns. The schools learn, for example, which families need babysitting or transportation; and the parents learn whether they can trust the school staff or otherwise allay their fears about attending. Since many low-income Hispanics feel uncomfortable in schools, successful projects hold the first meetings outside of the school, preferably at sites that are familiar to the parents. Successful first meetings are primarily social events; unsuccessful ones are formal events at school, with information aimed "at" the parents.

To retain the involvement of low-income Hispanic parents, every meeting has to respond to some needs or concerns of the parents. Programs that consult with parents regarding agendas and meeting formats and begin with the parents' agenda eventually cover issues that the school considers vital; those that stick exclusively to the school's agenda lose the parents.

Based on what it learned from its 42 School/Parent projects, HPDP concluded that overcoming the barriers between schools and Hispanic parents does not require large amounts of money; it does require personal outreach, non-judgmental communication, and respect for parents' feelings. HPDP found that although Hispanic school personnel can facilitate the process, non-Hispanics can also be effective. In fact, HPDP reported that the two most successful and innovative programs were led by a Chinese principal and an Anglo principal. Both, however, spoke Spanish.

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## Resources

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Hispanic Policy Development Project, 250 Park Ave. South, Suite 5000A New York, NY 10003

Mexican American Legal Defense Fund, 634 South Spring St., 11th Floor Los Angeles, CA 90014

National Council of La Raza, 810 First St., NE, Suite 300 Washington, DC 20002-4205

National Puerto Rican Coalition, 1700 K Street, NW Washington, DC 20006

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This Digest was developed by the ERIC Clearinghouse on Urban Education, with funding from the Office of Educational Research and Improvement, U.S. Department of Education, under contract no. R188062013. The opinions in this Digest do not necessarily reflect the position or policies of OERI or the Department of Education.





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## Forging Partnerships Between Mexican American Parents and the Schools

**ERIC**

**DIGEST**

by Nancy Feyl Chavkin and Dora Lara Gonzalez

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According to the Bureau of the Census (1994), there are approximately 13 million Mexican Americans in the United States. In her review of the status of education for Mexican American students, Sosa (1993) reports alarming statistics--a decline in high school completion rates, a steady rise in the dropout rate, and high numbers of students two or more years behind grade level. In light of these facts, educators have an educational imperative to look for new ways to work with Mexican American families. This digest describes research supporting family participation in students' education. It then describes barriers to participation faced by many Mexican American parents and successful programs and strategies for overcoming those barriers. Finally, the benefits of two-way communication and school-family partnerships are described.

### RESEARCH ON PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT AND STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Research has shown that one of the most promising ways to increase students' achievement is to involve their families (Chavkin, 1993; Henderson & Berla, 1994). Herbert Walberg (1984) found that family participation in education was twice as predictive of academic learning as family socioeconomic status. Establishing partnerships with families has many benefits for schools and families, but Epstein says, "the main reason to create such partnerships is to help all youngsters succeed in school and in later life" (1995, p. 701).

### BARRIERS TO PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

For many Mexican American parents, lack of involvement in their children's education is erroneously seen as lack of interest, but Montecel et al. (1993) present evidence that Mexican American parents do care about their children's education. The reasons for limited involvement include beliefs that the roles of home and school are sharply delineated. Mexican American parents see their role as being responsible for providing basic needs as well as instilling respect and proper behavior. They see the school's role as instilling knowledge (Nicolau & Ramos, 1993). They believe that one should not interfere with the job of the other. Nicolau and Ramos compare Mexican Americans' respect for teachers with the awe that most Americans have (or used to have) for doctors or priests.

Other barriers to parental involvement include a negative view of the school system, past negative experiences with education, and language barriers. Often parents view the school as a bureaucracy controlled by non-Hispanics. The school often reminds Mexican American parents of their own educational experiences including discrimination and humiliation for speaking Spanish. Many times the lack of bilingual staff can make parents feel powerless when they are attempting to resolve problems or advocate for their children.

## **OPENING THE DOORS TO MORE PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT**

How then can schools open the doors to more parental involvement and build partnerships with Mexican American families? Begin by making parental involvement easy and interesting, at a pace that is comfortable for parents. Outreach efforts can and will work, but they must be done in a culturally sensitive manner and begin with a strengths perspective. Mexican American families have many strengths and these strengths need to be recognized from the beginning. Nicolau and Ramos' (1993) examination of 42 projects provides helpful insights that can inform practice.

Communication should be a major focus of the involvement effort. Reception areas in schools should include bilingual staff; telephone calls and written communication should be available in Spanish. For some parents, home visits or visits at a neutral site, such as a community center, offer a less threatening environment. In general, the more personal the approach, the better it works for Mexican American parents. Written correspondence is not as effective as the personal conference; in fact, it is wrong to assume that all families are literate.

If meetings seem appropriate, invitations should be extended by parents to parents, preferably neighbor to neighbor. A good idea for a first meeting is to ask parents who are more familiar with school personnel to bring three friends to a meeting at a community center outside the school. Meetings should be informal and based on the interests of the parents, with transportation and child care provided.

## **SELECTING PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES**

There are many programs and activities for parents and schools to consider. Some focus on family involvement in home learning activities and others focus on parents' continued education. Each school must select and adapt activities that best match the interests and needs of their families. The programs described below are only a sample of the successful approaches being used across the country (Goodson, Swartz, & Millsap, 1991).

- Project FIEL (El Paso, Texas) was begun in 1985 and is in eight elementary schools in El Paso. This intergenerational literacy program involves limited-English-proficient parents and their kindergarten children in oral language, story writing, reading, discussions, and at-home activities.
- Prestame una Comadre (Springfield, Illinois) means "loan me a godmother" in Spanish and works with migrant Head Start families. Social workers conduct home visits as often as three times weekly and hold small group meetings.

Families work on increasing self-reliance, learning about child development and education, and improving family functioning.

- Academia del Pueblo--developed by the National Council of La Raza--provides afterschool and summer classes for Hispanic children, monthly parent groups, and literacy classes three times a week. The program operates at the Guadalupe Center, a multiservice organization in Kansas City, Missouri.
- McAllen Parental Involvement Program (McAllen, Texas) includes three core activities: Systematic Training for Effective Parenting (PECES is the Spanish version of this commercially available curriculum), evening study centers, and parent meetings on a variety of topics.

Some effective programs are part of a national or state network or are supported by private funds. ASPIRA Parents for Educational Excellence (APEX) trains Latino parents to become effective advocates for their children at home and at school. The Hispanic Policy Development Project has worked with hundreds of parents using an enrichment model rather than a deficit approach. Project AVANCE, a privately funded program in San Antonio, Texas, uses door-to-door recruitment strategies as part of its outreach to develop parenting skills among low-income Mexican American mothers. Mother-daughter programs, developed at Texas universities, work to expand the role of Hispanic women by exposing them to nontraditional roles, campus field trips, and career activities. Empowerment programs such as Comite de Padres Latinos in Carpinteria, California (Delgado-Gaitan, 1991), emphasize treating parents as valued participants and often lead to active participation by parents.

## USING THE PARTNERSHIP APPROACH

Sustaining family involvement requires a commitment to open, continuous, two-way communication with Mexican American families. Most schools have established methods of one-way communication with parents, but the need for more two-way communication cannot be stressed enough. It is critically important for educators to take the time to listen to parents. The attitudes and practices of teachers and principals make a difference in the amount of parental involvement and in the achievement of students (Dauber & Epstein, 1993). Sometimes educators overlook what they can learn from Mexican American families. These families are rich sources of information that can be used in the classroom. Parents have interacted with their children, and they know many of their learning styles as well as their strengths and weaknesses. Parents also know the community.

Partnerships with families require all participants to share responsibility for educational outcomes. This perspective represents a major shift for schools from merely delivering services to students to taking active, integrated roles that validate the cultural and social experiences of families. To succeed in this partnership role, staff need to ask parents for their ideas, meet with parent and community representatives to define goals, and develop a plan for parent and community involvement.

Training can help faculty and family members take on new roles needed for effective partnerships. Ongoing partnerships need evaluation and frequent checkpoints to see if

their goals and objectives are being met and if those goals and objectives are still appropriate. Keeping programs flexible helps everyone adjust to changes within the student body, families, the school staff, and the community.

## CONCLUSION

There is a big difference between the rhetoric of partnerships and the activity of partnerships. Educators must truly believe and act on the belief that parents are their children's first teacher and the only teacher that remains with a child for a long period of time. Educators must discard the old deficit model of working with families and, instead, operate on an enrichment model founded on the belief that parents truly want the best for their children. Not only must educators tell parents that they are equally as important as the school, they must tell students how important their homes and communities are. Having a partnership allows educators to tap a rich source of cultural knowledge and personal experiences. Mexican American families want their children to succeed in school, and educators have an important responsibility to work with these students and their families.

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This publication was prepared with funding from the Office of Educational Research and Improvement, U.S. Department of Education, under contract no. RR93002012. The opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the positions or policies of OERI, the Department, or AEL.

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- [Return to Previous Page](#)





## Hispanic Parent Involvement in Early Childhood Programs

by Linda M. Espinosa

ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. EDO-PS-95-3

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**INCREASING PARENTS' INVOLVEMENT** in their children's education is currently viewed as a cornerstone of most school reform efforts. This belief is expressed in President Clinton's plea during his 1994 State of the Union Message:

"Parents who know their children's teachers and turn off the television and help with the homework and teach their kids right from wrong--those kind of parents can make all the difference." There is remarkable consensus among educators, parents, and the general public that children will learn more and schools will improve if we can get parents to do a better job of supporting their children's schooling. Epstein (1992, p.1141) has summarized research on parent involvement as suggesting "that students at all grade levels do better academic work and have more positive school attitudes, higher aspirations, and other positive behaviors if they have parents who are aware, knowledgeable, encouraging, and involved."

However, evidence exists that merely increasing the AMOUNT of school involvement will not necessarily lead to such positive outcomes, especially for Hispanic families (Bauch, 1992). Hispanic parents have consistently demonstrated low rates of school involvement; when their involvement has increased, this increase has not necessarily led to parents' more positive perceptions of schools (Bauch, 1992; Costas, 1991). If Hispanic parents feel coerced and not listened to, they do not necessarily benefit from increased contact with the school. To determine effective strategies for connecting Hispanic parents and their children's early childhood programs, educators need to develop a greater understanding of the features of the Hispanic culture that influence parents' childrearing and socialization practices, communication styles, and orientation toward formal education.

### HISPANIC PROFILE

Although they are united by a common language, Hispanics in the U.S. are not a homogeneous group. They represent great diversity in terms of socioeconomic status, race, age, country of origin, and the nature and timing of their immigration (Nicolau & Ramos, 1990). Differences among Hispanic subgroups in communication styles and socialization practices are often greater than the overall differences between Hispanics and non-Hispanics (Haycock & Duany, 1991). Although Hispanics are the fastest growing ethnic group in the U.S., relatively little is known about how the Hispanic culture might interact with the typical American school culture to produce positive results for children.

Hispanics, except for Cuban-Americans, can be characterized as having high rates of poverty and low levels of educational achievement (Valdivieso & Nicolau, 1992). They are also one of the most educationally vulnerable minority groups in the U.S. They start kindergarten somewhat behind their peers; 44%, by age 13, are at least one year below expected grade level; and more than 40% drop out before completing high school (Liontos, 1992; Nicolau & Ramos, 1990). Although the academic achievement levels and dropout rates for other racial and ethnic groups have improved in the past decade, Hispanic school performance remains consistently poor (Liontos, 1992). In order to correct this situation, educators must understand cultural factors that may be acting as barriers to Hispanic children's educational success and then devise approaches to help early childhood programs reach out to Hispanic parents and form partnerships with the home.

## CULTURAL CHARACTERISTICS

There are some differences in the way Hispanic and other American children are socialized. Hispanic culture tends to emphasize obedience and to value respect for adult authority. A directive style of communication between parent and child is most common, with little collaborative conversation, elaborated speech models, or early literacy experiences (Espinosa & Lesar, 1994; Liontos, 1992). Consequently the language development of Hispanic children is frequently behind that of their American middle class peers when they enter kindergarten, and may appear especially so if they have been assessed with formal language measures.

Throughout Hispanic culture there is a widespread belief in the absolute authority of the school and teachers. In many Latin American countries it is considered rude for a parent to intrude into the life of the school. Parents believe that it is the school's job to educate and the parent's job to nurture and that the two jobs do not mix. A child who is well educated is one who has learned moral and ethical behavior.

Hispanics, as a whole, have strong family ties, believe in family loyalty, and have a collective orientation that supports community life; and have been found to be field dependent with a sensitivity to nonverbal indicators of feeling (Zuniga, 1992). Culturally this is represented by an emphasis on warm, personalized styles of interaction, a relaxed sense of time, and a need for an informal atmosphere for communication. Given these preferences, a culture clash may result when Hispanic students and parents are confronted with the typical task-oriented style of most American teachers.

While an understanding of the general cultural characteristics of Hispanics is helpful, it is important to not overgeneralize. Each family and child is unique, and care should be taken to not assume values and beliefs just because a family speaks Spanish and is from Latin America. It is important that teachers spend the time to discover the particular values, beliefs, and practices of the families in their community.

Teachers must also examine their own attitudes about working with a minority group that speaks a different language from their own and may not share the values of their own culture. To establish genuine partnerships with parents, genuine relationships with parents

built on a foundation of mutual trust and openness must first be developed.

## **STRATEGIES THAT WORK**

Most, if not all, Hispanic parents want their children to succeed in school. Some education professionals have called Hispanic parents a great "untapped resource" (Nicolau & Ramos, 1990, p.9). Their concern for their children, commitment to family, respect for education, and desire for a better life have rarely been capitalized on by the educational establishment. Projects in early childhood programs and in schools that have successfully involved Hispanic parents recommend the following strategies:

1. **PERSONAL TOUCH.** It is crucial to use face-to-face communication in the Hispanic parents' primary language when first making contact. Written flyers or articles sent home have proven to be ineffective even when written in Spanish. It may also take several personal meetings before the parents gain sufficient trust to actively participate. Home visits are a particularly good way to begin to develop rapport.
2. **NON-JUDGMENTAL COMMUNICATION.** In order to gain the trust and confidence of Hispanic parents, teachers must avoid making them feel they are to blame or are doing something wrong. Parents need to be supported for their strengths, not judged for perceived failings.
3. **PERSEVERANCE IN MAINTAINING INVOLVEMENT.** To keep Hispanic parents actively engaged, activities planned by the early childhood program must respond to a real need or concern of the parents. Teachers should have a good idea about what parents will get out of each meeting and how the meeting will help them in their role as parents.
4. **BILINGUAL SUPPORT.** All communication with Hispanic parents, written and oral, must be provided in Spanish and English. Many programs report that having bicultural and bilingual staff helps promote trust (Espinosa & Lesar, 1994).
5. **STRONG LEADERSHIP AND ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT.** Flexible policies, a welcoming environment, and a collegial atmosphere all require administrative leadership and support. As with other educational projects or practices that require innovation and adaptation, the efforts of teachers alone cannot bring success to parent involvement projects. Principals must also be committed to project goals.
6. **STAFF DEVELOPMENT FOCUSED ON HISPANIC CULTURE.** All staff must understand the key features of Hispanic culture and its impact on their students' behavior and learning styles. It is the educator's obligation to learn as much about the children and their culture and background as possible.
7. **COMMUNITY OUTREACH.** Many Hispanic families could benefit from family literacy programs, vocational training, ESL programs, improved medical and dental services, and other community-based social services. A school or early childhood program can serve as a resource and referral agency to support the overall strength and stability of the families.

## **CONCLUSION**

It is critical that early childhood programs demonstrate successful approaches to working with Hispanic families. By forging closer communication and bridging the cultural gap between home and school, early childhood educators can establish a basis for future school success. The current educational status of Hispanic children creates a sense of urgency about these issues.

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RR93002007 U.S.; Illinois ED382412

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## Hispanic Preschool Education: An Important Opportunity

by Wendy Schwartz

ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. EDO-UD-96-2

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**YOUNG CHILDREN LEARN** many language, social, and practical skills in preschool that benefit them immediately and also enhance their chances for future achievement. For poor children, preschool helps to offset the social, emotional, physical, and cognitive burdens that can result from their living situation. For those who speak little or no English, preschool can provide a valuable bilingual education (Kagan, 1995). In recognition of the benefits of early childhood education, increased Federal funds have recently become available for preschool programs and for incorporating transition-to-school activities into them (Kagan & Garcia, 1995).

Nevertheless, Hispanic parents have been slow to overcome their historical reluctance to turn their young children over to non-family members for care. Nearly half of Hispanic mothers stay at home to raise their children. Even parents who need child care frequently prefer using relatives rather than a preschool, given the size and strength of extended Hispanic families and traditional deep concerns about child safety (Fuller et al., 1994).

The educational boost that preschool provides is particularly important for the one-quarter of Hispanic families that are poor by Federal guidelines. While Hispanic families are like others in that they want their children to succeed in school, poverty can seriously impede children's academic success and their parents' ability to actively foster high achievement.

This digest describes strategies and programs specially designed to meet the early education needs of Hispanic children, particularly those whose families suffer from poverty. It also reviews efforts to recruit the children; to involve their parents in activities that will enhance their children's learning; and to provide parents with literacy, job, and other skills training, and a range of social services. Hundreds of such programs, developed by community leaders and educators around the country, are now operating.

The review here examines preschool experiences in situations where the vast majority of families are Hispanic, but it offers insights applicable to preschools in communities with only a small Hispanic population. It is limited to programs committed to strengthening children's knowledge of the various Hispanic cultures and the Spanish language as they teach English, although not all preschool programs use a bilingual strategy to teaching English literacy.

## **Outreach and Parent Involvement Strategies**

Despite the initial reluctance of Hispanic families to send their children to preschool, many do ultimately decide on enrolling them as a result of persuasive and culturally sensitive recruitment strategies. Similar strategies also promote parent involvement during their children's school attendance. In fact, parent involvement is frequently the only common denominator among successful education programs for all children (Lewis, 1993).

Preschool recruiters in the Hispanic community are not necessarily associated with a particular school. They may be church leaders, members of community-based organizations (CBOs) or job-training staffs, social service providers, or even pediatricians, but they share the goal of ensuring that young children receive an effective early education (Lewis, 1993).

It is best for recruiters to communicate with parents about the benefits of preschool using the parents' native language if their English language skills are limited, in person, on the telephone, and in notes. Using their native language, even when parents are bilingual, promotes trust as well as better communication. Meetings should be held in conveniently located and neutral locations (i.e., not schools or other possibly intimidating environs), and child care, transportation, and snacks should be provided. Scheduling should take parents' work schedules into account. Face-to-face contact is most effective, and home visits can be useful ("Considering Ethnic Culture," 1993; Blakes-Greenway, 1994; Landerholm, Rubenstein, & Losch, 1994; Espinosa, 1995).

It is important for recruiters to recognize that some parents, particularly immigrant and poor parents, may not agree that children will benefit academically from early childhood education. Rather than try to change parents' beliefs, recruiters can initially emphasize advantages of preschool that respond to the way parents actually think about child behavior (Zepeda & Espinosa, 1988). The Hispanic Development Project has produced parent materials on cognitive development in English and Spanish that offer useful suggestions for ways to help their children learn while they are engaging in everyday activities with them (Nicolau, Ramos, & Palombo, 1990).

Showing parents how the whole family can benefit from their children's preschool attendance is also an effective recruiting strategy. Providing English language or other skills development classes for adults can bolster parents' belief in the value of the entire program, of which preschool is but one part, and can provide them with an education that can significantly improve the quality of their lives (McCollum & Russo, 1993). Project FLAME, a Federally-funded urban program for Mexican American families, not only teaches literacy skills to the parents and preschoolers, but encourages parents to draw on these skills for personal empowerment when dealing with the various public agencies in their lives. Other attractive parent programs include workshops on topics of great relevance, such as parenting skills, gang awareness, communication and study skills, and vocational training (McLeod, 1996; Espinosa, 1995).

Offering comprehensive services, including case management, can be an important inducement to parents to enroll their children (McCollum & Russo, 1993). Even simply

providing parents with information about community medical and social services and with forms they need (i.e., food stamp applications) can promote interest in preschool programs.

More general recruiting strategies, usually undertaken by preschools themselves, are media releases (in English and Spanish) and brightly colored leaflets distributed to churches, CBOs, and other places where parents can be found.

### **Preschool Program Types**

The term "preschool" is used to define a wide variety of programs in centers for young children. Some have educational components that consist of just a few minutes a day of direct instruction in skills building of any kind (sometimes delivered by a video presentation). Others use a carefully constructed age-appropriate academic curriculum that fills the day. Some have staffs with degrees in early childhood education and with state certification; others employ community members whose experience is limited to what they learned from rearing their own children.

While certain locally-funded preschools in poorer communities may suffer from a lack of resources of all types, those with Head Start, Even Start, and other government funding may provide a better education than even the most expensive private preschools (Kagan, 1995). Head Start, the largest public preschool program, provides free services to poor children through CBOs, and sets standards for required educational and social and health service components. Staff must help the children meet specific school readiness goals, although each Head Start school is free to design its own program. For example, one goal is to help students develop English literacy skills, but it is left to the individual school to decide whether to provide bilingual or monolingual instruction. Similarly, the local projects that comprise Even Start, a Federally-funded intergenerational literacy program, have a mandate to work with Head Start, but each is free to choose its own instructional strategy.

### **Goals**

The most important goal of preschool programs is to develop "the whole child," but most programs are also concerned with serving families. A corollary aim is to prepare teachers and other care givers to work sensitively and effectively with children from diverse backgrounds (Villarreal, 1993).

For children. Goal 1 of the National Education Goals Panel established a set of domains related to the school-readiness of young children that emphasizes overall development but also recommends the early acquisition of literacy skills and some general knowledge. The approach taken by programs to meet the goals may differ considerably in their emphasis, however. Some programs use the developmental approach advocated by the National Association for the Education of Young Children, focusing on personal, social, and intellectual development, rather than on academics or school readiness (Pequenitos en Accion, 1991). Other programs are more concerned with ensuring that minority and Limited English Speaking students acquire the skills and knowledge that many other students have when entering school (Williams, De Gaetano, Sutherland, & Harrington, 1985).

Regardless of emphasis, most aim to develop many of the following characteristics and competencies in their students (Pequenitos en Accion, 1991; Villarreal, 1993; Kagan, 1995):

- \*A positive self-image.
- \*Social and emotional growth.
- \*Literacy and language development.
- \*Expansion of early concepts, independent thinking, and problem-solving skills.
- \*Cognition and general knowledge.
- \*Creativity.
- \*Interest in the natural world, and aesthetic appreciation and expression.
- \*Respect for human dignity, cultural and linguistic diversity, and the rights of others.
- \*Motor development.

For families. Helping families learn how to help their children is universal among programs, but limited resources frequently force educators to choose among possible activities. As a result, staff is likely to believe that its first responsibility is to the children, not parents, when choices must be made. Also, intensive family programs that respond to the needs of parents challenged by poverty and other problems may simply be beyond the ability, and even the will, of most preschool staff. Nevertheless, early childhood educators and policy makers believe that preschool is the obvious place for two-generation service programs. Therefore, preschool programs are increasingly seeking partnerships with other community programs and additional public and private funds (Kagan, 1995).

### **Program Philosophy**

It is generally agreed that young children learn most readily when instruction builds on what they already know from experience. Therefore, preschools that serve bilingual and multicultural students draw on the children's native cultures and languages. The philosophy of Project ALERTA, designed for use in a variety of preschool settings, is representative of many other programs in that it "rejects the notion that bilingual perspectives or perspectives that are multicultural are simple additions to a preconceived program. Instead, it maintains that the development of such perspectives pervades the total process of human growth and development... multiculturalism and bilingualism must be interwoven with the entire structure of the program in order to have real meaning for the persons--children or adults--participating in it" (Williams et al., 1985, p. ix). For example, in Hispanic families there are roles for children of all ages, siblings are not separated by age, and they are used to taking care of each other. Therefore, multicultural preschools can create opportunities for multi-age groupings where older children can develop caring skills for younger children and younger children can become accustomed to looking up to role models ("Considering Ethnic Culture," 1993).

### **Basic Skills Program**

Most early education programs emphasize literacy development--monolingual in English or Spanish, or bilingual--in the belief that it is the key to overall cognitive development. Thus, the most effective instructional programs consist of a high level of functional

communication between teachers and students, and collaborative learning where small groups of children work together on a project or to solve a problem. These programs discourage lecturing by teachers and individualized work tasks that limit student speech (Garcia, 1995). Some preschool programs integrate teaching skills to children and parents together in the belief that both will learn more readily when doing so together.

One effective literacy activity for children and adults is story telling and writing. Students create stories based on their culture and experiences with words, and illustrate them by drawing and cutting and pasting pictures from magazines. For parents unaccustomed to reading to their children, this lesson provides a way to ease them into an unfamiliar but important home learning activity (Landerholm et al., 1994). At a Chicago preschool, family science lessons are planned around food so that Limited English Speaking students can see the items being discussed, learn their English names through multiple repetitions by the teacher, and learn the lesson even though much of it may be in an unfamiliar language (Landerholm et al., 1994).

### **Bilingual Instruction**

The primary goal of bilingual preschool programs is to help children develop their first language skills as fully as possible, and to help them learn a second language, which they may not know at all upon entering preschool or may already be using to some extent. An example of this approach is Un Marco Abierto, which operates according to the belief that teaching in a child's first language builds esteem and pride in family and community (Pequenitos en Accion, 1991). The National Association of the Education of Young Children has a particularly strong position on the importance of strengthening children's native language; a recent position paper asserts that "loss of their home language may result in the disruption of family communication patterns, which may lead to the loss of intergenerational wisdom; damage to individual and community esteem; and the children's potential nonmastery of their home language or English" ("NAEYC Position Statement," 1996, p.5). A common philosophy, exemplified by Project ALERTA, is that language learning is never taught separately from the content of learning activities.

### **Staff Qualifications and Development**

Preschool staff members may vary widely in their education level, training, and experience, although schools that receive public funding may have to employ teachers who meet certain credentialing criteria. Small preschools in poor areas serving predominantly minority children are more likely than others to have inadequately trained staff because they have access to fewer community resources and parents can pay only minimal amounts for enrollment. Their staffs are likely to be comprised of female community members, some of whom do not have even a high school diploma and many of whom receive neither general child care training nor direction about curriculum or learning activities (Reginatto, 1993). Some staff without formal teacher education training do complete a special preschool education program, however.

Educators agree that, regardless of other competencies, teachers of non-native English

speaking children should be able to communicate in the children's home language and must be sensitive to their cultural background because adults' cultural background affects the ways they communicate with children (Lewis, 1993; "NAEYC Position Paper," 1996). Most educators also believe that at least some members of the staff must share the native cultures of the students.

Since it is inevitable that some teachers have misconceptions about the characteristics of particular population groups, and even prejudices, it is useful to confront such beliefs directly in training in order to dispel them (Nicolau & Ramos, 1990). Becoming a role model for the celebration of cultural diversity, and establishing a classroom climate of acceptance, respect, and self-appreciation, should be key functions of teachers (Reginatto, 1993).

Along with more traditional preschool coursework, pre- and inservice training should include strategies to improve family literacy (Mulhern, Rodriguez-Brown, & Shanahan, 1994). Some specific training areas for working with children include (Pequenitos en Accion, 1991; McLaughlin, Blanchard, & Osanai, 1995; "NAEYC Position Paper," 1996):

\*Working with young children.

\*Language acquisition.

\*Second-language learning.

\*Use of translators.

\*Working with diverse families.

\*Sociolinguistics.

\*Assessment of language development.

\*Cross-cultural communication.

\*The politics of race, language, and culture.

\*Community involvement.

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The Digest was developed by the ERIC Clearinghouse on Urban Education with funding from the Office of Educational Research and Improvement, U.S. Department of Education, under contract no. RR930020016. The opinions in this Digest do not necessarily reflect the position or policies of OERI or the Department of Education. ERIC Clearinghouse on Urban Education, New York, N.Y. Office of Educational Research and Improvement (ED), Washington, DC. RR93002016 U.S.; New York ED405398

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## Early Childhood Digest:

### **Latino Families: Getting Involved In Your Children's Education**

April 1999

Spanish version

*My name is Lorena, and 10 years ago I came to the USA from Guatemala. Now I have a son in first grade and a daughter in third grade. Schools in this country want parents to get involved with the education of their children, but I'm not really sure what to do. Besides, we're so busy! School activities are often during the day when I'm working, and at night I need to stay home to take care of the kids. Even when I go to the school, it's hard to communicate because not many teachers speak Spanish.*

Many Latino parents feel just like Lorena. They have many questions. What is parent involvement? What can I do at home to help my child learn better? How am I supposed to work with the preschools and schools in this country? Can I trust them?

These are hard questions, but they are important questions. Children are more successful when their families are involved in their education. One of your roles as a parent is to make sure that your child receives the best education possible. To do this, you need to be involved!

#### **What do schools want in this country?**

By schools we refer to childcare, preschool, Head Start, and kindergarten. If you grew up in Latin America, the schools might have been very different. Maybe parents expected schools to do all the teaching. In the United States, families and schools are supposed to be a team. The family is the biggest influence on a child's life, and the school is the next biggest influence. Schools expect parents to get involved, both at home and at school. Parents are supposed to ask questions. Your ideas and questions are important. The relationship between the family and the school makes a big difference in how much a child can benefit from school.

#### **How do I help with my child's education at home?**

- *Children learn better when they are healthy and well-rested.* You need to make sure that your children are getting enough sleep, going to the doctor for immunizations, getting dental checkups, and eating a healthy diet. Your community clinic can give you more information about how to do these things.
- *Children learn everywhere.* At home, you can teach your children the names and uses of things, like the furniture, the refrigerator, and the telephone. In the community, you can talk to them about things like cars, streets, stores, and the

weather. They will be learning important language skills no matter what language you're speaking, so you should do these activities in whatever language is most comfortable for you.

- *Children need a good learning environment.* This means that you should take your children to the library, read books with them, and talk with them whenever you can, even when they are very young. Limit their TV watching. It's best to watch educational TV shows like "Sesame Street" or "Where in Time is Carmen Sandiego?" And if your children are old enough to have homework, they need a quiet place to study. All these things will help them do better in school.
- *Children need a positive attitude toward school.* Children learn attitudes from their parents. When you do all these things to get involved in your children's education, your children discover that you think learning is very important. Then they start to believe that learning is important too, and this has a powerful influence on how well they do in school.
- *Share your high expectations.* Perhaps you dream of your child finishing high school or attending college. Share this dream with your child often, starting at a very young age. Sharing your high expectations can help your child succeed.

## How do I help with my child's education at school?

- *Use translators.* Ask the school for a translator if you need one. Or, feel free to bring along a friend who speaks both English and Spanish. If you want to speak with the teacher or someone else at the school, it is important that you understand each other well.
- *Build trust.* Many Latino parents are afraid of the government, and they know that schools are part of the government. Talk to other Latino parents who have gotten involved with the local schools to find out what their experiences have been.
- *Get to know your child's teacher.* Talk with the teacher frequently, even when things are going well and there are no problems with your child. Ask about your child's learning and behavior. Ask about things you can do at home to help your child learn better. Ask about ways you can get involved at the school for example, helping out in the classroom or attending class field trips.
- *Attend parent-teacher conferences.* If you are not available at regular conference times, call and ask for a time that fits your schedule. Try to bring questions about things you would like to know, or things that are worrying you.
- *Ask questions.* To understand the school better, it is important to ask questions. How can I stop that bully from picking on my son in the playground? Why is my daughter painting in class when I want her to learn to read? The better you understand what's happening, the better it is for your child.
- *Remember, you are the expert on your own child!* When you talk to the teachers, you can teach them about ways to work better with your child. Maybe your son learns better when he sits closer to the teacher. Maybe your daughter will be sleepy because there was a fire alarm in your building last night. It's better for your children if you tell the teacher these things. Your feelings and opinions are important.

- *Learn about school rules and school programs.* Find out how they affect your child and how he or she can benefit from them.

## **What if I have problems with the school?**

- *Keep trying.* Remember, teachers and principals are busy people, just like you. If you tell them about a problem and nothing changes, maybe they forgot or didn't have time yet to take care of it. Call them again, or write them a note. Don't give up, because then nothing will change. But they do need to listen to you. If you think they aren't taking your problem seriously, there are other things you can try.
- *Set up a special meeting.* Make an appointment to speak with the teacher or the guidance counselor about your concern. If that doesn't work, you may want to meet with the principal. You might be upset, but remember to stay calm!
- *If you do not agree, you can appeal.* Maybe you disagree with the school's decision about your child, such as being placed in a reading group that is too easy. Maybe the school won't hire enough translators. You have the right to appeal these decisions. You can find out how to start the appeal process by asking someone at the school or the school district office. It's important to do what you think is best for your child's education.
- *Talk with parents and advocates outside the school.* Your neighbor or someone at your church might already have solved a problem similar to the one you're having now. Some communities even have organizations to help Latino parents. Ask around to see if anyone has advice for you. Solving a problem can be easier when you have help.

*Hi, this is Lorena again. It's been a real struggle, but this year I got more involved in my children's education. We have a quiet hour every night for doing homework, and I'm teaching my children to love reading and talking. When I asked the teacher, she even found a translator and offered me special meeting times that fit my schedule. After a year of getting to know people at the school, I feel more comfortable and welcome there. It wasn't always easy, but some of them were very helpful and friendly. Now I know how important it is to get involved, and I hope you will too.*

This issue of *Early Childhood Digest* was prepared by Eliot Levine of the Harvard Family Research Project (HFRP). For information on HFRP and other publications, please write to HFRP at: 38 Concord Avenue, Cambridge, MA 02138, call us at (617)496-4304, or visit our Web site at: <http://hugse1.harvard.edu/~hfrp>

This *Digest* was sponsored by the National Institute on Early Childhood Development and Education of the Office of Educational Research and Improvement, U.S. Department of Education. It is also available in Spanish. It may be reproduced at no cost. For additional copies in English or Spanish, contact Carol Sue Fromboluti at (202)219-1672, or visit our Web site at: <http://www.ed.gov/offices/OERI/ECI/>





## Promoting Reading Among Mexican American Children



® by Yvonne I. Murray & José Velázquez

EDO RC 99-5 (December 1999)

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Literature addresses the universal need for stories. Stories are most meaningful and best able to promote literacy when they speak to a student's world. Good books can help children develop pride in their ethnic identity, provide positive role models, develop knowledge about cultural history, and build self-esteem. However, Mexican American students in the United States often do not experience literature in this way. This Digest identifies key challenges, recommends classroom strategies, provides literature selection guidelines, and suggests reading lists for various grade levels.

### Mexican American Children's Literature

Literary works written for or by Mexican Americans were not represented in mainstream children's publications in the United States until the 1940s. Beginning in the 1940s, Mexican American literary characters were developed largely by European American writers who were removed from the cultural experience of the Mexican American minority. Consequently, portrayals of Mexican Americans reflected a rural existence and stereotypical images (Harris, 1993).

Between 1940 and 1973 there were only four or five books a year published on Mexican American themes by the major publishers of children's literature. Analyses from the late 1980s and early 1990s showed even fewer--only one to three books a year (Schon, 1988; Cortés, 1992). Of the approximately 5,000 children's books published annually by major publishers in the United States, books about or by Mexican Americans made up one tenth of 1%. These statistics reveal the persistent dearth of children's literature by Mexican American authors through the early 1990s. The literary genres were limited, too. Most were folklore, legends, and protest pieces (Barrera, Liguori, & Salas, 1993; Harris, 1993; Tatum, 1990; Schon, 1988).

In the early 1990s awareness of these issues resulted in the publication of growing numbers of books with Mexican American themes and authors. Small publishing houses such as Arte Público, Piñata Books, and Bilingual Review Press have increased dissemination of minority literature and helped launch writers such as Tomas Rivera, Rolando Hinojosa-Smith, and Sandra Cisneros to national recognition (Barrera, Liguori, & Salas, 1993).

### Classroom Strategies

Using effective classroom strategies and selecting the best literature for particular groups of students are the two pivots for promoting reading among Mexican American children. The following strategies can help Mexican-origin and other teachers improve both their methods for promoting reading in the classroom and their students' cultural understanding (Murray, 1998a; Barrera, Liguori, & Salas, 1993; Escamilla, 1992; Galda, 1991; Diaz, Moll, & Mehan, 1986):

- Explore Mexican American culture, history, and contemporary society through texts such as *Anglos and Mexicans in the Making of Texas 1836-1986* (Montejano, 1987), *The Hispanic Americans* (Meltzer, 1982), or *The Mexicans in America* (Pinchot, 1989).
- Consult book reviews, such as those in *Our Family, Our Friends, Our World: An Annotated Guide to Significant Multicultural Books for Children and Teenagers* (Miller-Lachmann, 1992).
- Take an ethnic literature course. From the 1960s to the present, a growing body of literature written by or for Mexican Americans has emerged.
- Include multicultural readers in the secondary level curriculum, such as *Mexican American Literature* (Tatum, 1990) or *Arrivals: Cross-cultural Experience in Literature* (Huizenga, 1995).
- Incorporate trade books whenever possible, using selection criteria (see Reviewing Literature and Selecting The Best, below).
- When possible, invite local Mexican American authors to talk with or read to classes. Correspond with one or more authors located through Web sites.
- Participate in school district committees that select curriculum materials. Make a case for including various U.S. minority group histories and literatures to be studied as serious literary works.
- Request in-service seminars by university and school district experts on the use of Mexican American literature and interdisciplinary instruction.
- Organize a committee of volunteer parents to suggest or review selections of readings for the class.
- Invite minority parents or grandparents to present oral traditions by sharing family histories or experiences. Written collections of their stories could be included in the school library.

### **Reviewing Literature and Selecting the Best**

The following checklist provides a few important guidelines for selecting appropriate classroom literature (Murray, 1998b; Escamilla, 1992; Diaz, Moll, & Mehan, 1986):

- Does the selection present specific and accurate information about the culture?
- Do the illustrations and/or text reflect the diversity of the people or do they reflect stereotypes?
- Are Mexican-origin characters depicted in active (not passive or submissive) roles?
- Does the story line and/or character development lend itself to a universal interpretation?

- Does the story line and/or character development lend itself to a universal interpretation?
  - Does the narrative voice in the selection come from a perspective within the culture?
  - If the cultural elements were removed, would there be a developed plot structure?
  - Is the culture presented in a positive way? Do the characters come to a constructive resolution of conflicts? Are the characters multidimensional?
  - Can mainstream works (i.e., literary canon) parallel the themes, issues, or characters of the selection? Identify them, then compare and discuss.
  - Are the Spanish words or phrases in the text understandable within the context of the sentences? Is there a glossary?
- 

### Suggested Selections by Grade Levels

The following authors and works have been reviewed (Murray, 1998a) and represent some of the authentic within-the-culture perspectives available today.

#### GRADES PRE-K-3:

*Abuela* by Arthur Dorros (Elisa Kleven, illustrator)  
*A Birthday Basket for Tia* by Pat Mora (Cecily Lang, illustrator)  
*Arroz con Leche* by Lulu Delacre (author and illustrator)  
*Diego* by Jonah Winter (Jeanette Winter, illustrator)  
*Family Pictures: Cuadros de familia* by Carmen Lomas Garza  
*Hairs: Pelitos* by Sandra Cisneros (Terry Ybañez, illustrator)  
*I Speak English for My Mom* by Muriel Stanek (Judith Friedman, illustrator)  
*Juan Tuza and the Magic Pouch* by Francisco X. Mora (author and illustrator)  
*Listen to the Desert: Oye al desierto* by Pat Mora (Francisco X. Mora, illustrator)  
*Mr. Sugar Came to Town: La Vista del Sr. Aziúcar* by Harriet Rohmer  
*Pablo's Tree* by Pat Mora (Cecily Lang, illustrator)  
*Patchwork Colcha: A Children's Collection* by Carmen Tafolla  
*Pupuriupú: Cuentos de Niños* by Larry Daste (Sabine Ulibarri, illustrator)  
*The Wedding of Don Octavio* by Patricia Zelver  
*The Woman Who Knew the Language of the Animals* by Denise Chavez  
*Tomás and the Library Lady* by Pat Mora (Raúl Colón, illustrator)  
*Too Many Tamales* by Gary Soto (Ed Martinez, illustrator)

#### GRADES 4-6

*The Adventures of Connie and Diego* by María García (Malaquías Montoya, illustrator)  
*Calor* by Amado Peña (illustrator) & Juanita Alba  
*Hector Lives in the United States Now: The Story of a Mexican-American Child* by

Joan Hewett  
*How We Came to the Fifth World: A Creation Story from Ancient Mexico the Americas*(Tales of adapted by Harriet Rohmer, Mary Anchondo (Graciela Carrillo DeLopez, illustrator)  
*Maria Molina and the Days of the Dead* by Kathleen Krull (Enrique O. Sanchez, illustrator)  
*Rosita's Christmas Wish* by Mary Ann Smothers Bruni  
*Saturday Market* by Patricia Grossman (Enrique O. Sanchez, illustrator)  
*Sonnets to Human Beings and Other Selected Works* by Carmen Tafolla  
*The Cat's Meow* by Gary Soto (Joe Cepeda, illustrator)  
*The Farolitos of Christmas* by Rudolfo Anaya (Edward Gonzales, illustrator)  
*The Maldonado Miracle* by Theodore Taylor  
*The Piñata Maker: El Piñatero* by George Ancona  
*The Woman Who Outshone the Sun: The Legend of Lucia Zenteno* by Alejandro Cruz Martinez, Rosalma Zubizarreta (Fernando Olivera, illustrator)

#### **GRADES 7-9:**

*Baseball in April* by Gary Soto  
*Cool Salsa* by Lori Carlson  
*El Mago* by Ron Arias  
*Everybody Knows Tobie* by Daniel Garza  
*Friends from the Other Side* by Gloria Anzaldúa  
*I Can Hear the Cowbells Ring* by Lionel García  
*Hispanic, Female and Young: An Anthology* edited by Phyllis Tashlik  
*Latino Voices* by Frances Aparicio  
*Mexican American Literature* (anthology) edited by Charles Tatum  
*Neighborhood Odes* by Gary Soto  
*Quinceañera: A Latina's Journey to Womanhood* by Mary Lankford  
*Taking Sides* by Gary Soto  
*The Anaya Reader* by Rudolfo Anaya  
*The Challenge* by Rudolfo Anaya

#### **GRADES 10-12:**

*Barrio Boy* by Ernesto Galarza  
*Bless Me, Ultima* by Rudolfo Anaya  
*Chicano* by Richard Vasquez  
*Fair Gentlemen of Belken County* by Rolando Hinojosa-Smith  
*Get Your Tortillas Together* by Carmen Tafolla  
*Heart of Aztlán* by Rudolfo A. Anaya  
*Inheritance of Strangers* by Nash Candelaria  
*Latino Rainbow* by Carlos Cumpián  
*Like Water for Chocolate* by Laura Esquivel  
*Mi Abuela Fumaba Puros: My Grandma Smoked Cigars* by Sabine Ulibarri  
*New Chicana: Chicano Writing* edited by Charles Tatum

*Oddsplayer* by Joe Rodríguez  
*Pieces of the Heart* by Gary Soto  
*Pocho* by José Antonio Villarreal  
*Rituals of Survival: A Woman's Portfolio* by Nicholasa Mohr  
*Schoolland: A Novel* by Max Martinez  
*The Day the Cisco Kid Shot John Wayne* by Nash Candelaria  
*The Earth Did Not Devour Him* by Tomás Rivera  
*The Heart of Aztlán* by Rudolfo Anaya  
*The House on Mango Street* by Sandra Cisneros  
*The Iguana Killer* by Alberto Ríos  
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*Tortuga* by Rudolfo Anaya

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This publication was prepared with funding from the Office of Educational Research and Improvement, U.S. Department of Education, under contract no. ED-99-CO-0027. The opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the positions or policies of OERI, the Department, or AEL.

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- Other Mexican American Digests
- Mexican American Page

# Appendix C

## The Importance of Fathers in Educational Achievement (National Center for Education Statistics Briefs)

- Factors Associated With Fathers' and Mothers' Involvement in Their Children's Schools
- How Involved Are Fathers in Their Children's Schools?
- Nonresident Fathers Can Make a Difference in Children's School Performance
- Students Do Better When Their Fathers Are Involved at School



ISSUE  
BRIEF

April 1998

## Factors Associated With Fathers' and Mothers' Involvement in Their Children's Schools

Parent involvement in children's education is important for children's school success (U.S. Department of Education, 1994; Henderson and Berla, 1994). Not all children, however, have parents who are involved in their schools. This issue brief examines factors that are associated with fathers' and mothers' involvement in their children's schools among children in kindergarten through 12th grade living in two-parent and in single-parent families. The data for this analysis come from the 1996 National Household Education Survey (NHES:96), sponsored by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES).

The NHES:96 asked about four types of school activities that parents could participate in during the school year: attending a general school meeting, attending a regularly scheduled parent-teacher conference, attending a school or class event, and serving as a volunteer at the school. Parents who participated in none or only one activity are said to have low involvement. Parents who participated in two activities are described as having moderate involvement. Parents who participated in three or four activities are said to be highly involved in their children's schools.<sup>1</sup>

Children in elementary school are more likely than children in middle or high school to have parents who are highly involved in their schools.

Mothers and fathers in two-parent and in single-parent families tend to decrease their involvement in their children's schools as their children move from elementary to middle to high school (table 1). Among children in kindergarten through 5th grade, 69 percent of children living in two-parent families and 60 percent living in mother-only families have mothers who are highly involved in their schools. Among children in grades 9 through 12, however, only 39 percent of children living in two-parent families and 32 percent living in mother-only families have mothers who are highly involved in their schools. Similarly, the proportion of children living in two-parent families with fathers who are highly involved in their schools decreases from 30 percent in elementary school to 23 percent in high school. Part of the decrease in parental involvement is due to schools offering parents fewer opportunities for involvement as children grow older (U.S. Department of Education, 1997).

Table 1.—Percent of children whose parents are involved in their schools, by level of involvement<sup>1</sup> and selected child and family characteristics: Students in grades K–12, 1996

	Two-parent families				Single-parent families			
	Mother		Father		Mother		Father	
	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High
Child's grade level								
Kindergarten - 5 <sup>th</sup> grade	12	69	43	30	16	60	21	53
6 <sup>th</sup> - 8 <sup>th</sup> grade	22	51	50	25	28	45	29	53
9 <sup>th</sup> - 12 <sup>th</sup> grade	36	39	54	23	43	32	40	27
Parent's education <sup>2</sup>								
Less than high school	43	31	72	10	40	32	35	41
High school or equivalent	24	51	55	21	28	46	34	36
VoTech or some college	18	59	45	28	21	56	25	51
Bachelor's degree	12	69	35	37	13	64	22	54
Graduate/professional school	10	70	31	41	18	62	19	67
Household income								
Less than \$25,000	32	42	66	15	29	45	31	43
\$25,000 - 34,999	24	52	56	21	22	53	30	38
\$35,000 - 49,000	19	59	44	29	19	58	32	45
\$50,000 - 74,999	16	61	38	32	16	64	19	57
\$75,000 or more	13	68	35	37	19	57	18	64

<sup>1</sup> Low involvement is participation in none or only one activity. High involvement is participation in three or four activities. Percents are computed across rows but do not sum to 100 because the percent with moderate involvement is not shown.

<sup>2</sup> Education of mother for mother's involvement and education of father for father's involvement.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 1996 National Household Education Survey.

<sup>1</sup> Not all schools offer parents the opportunity to be involved in each of these activities. Low involvement can result because parents do not take advantage of available opportunities for involvement or because schools do not offer them opportunities for involvement.

**Children with more family resources as measured by parents' education and household income are more likely than children with fewer resources to have parents who are highly involved in their schools.**

Regardless of whether children live in two-parent or in single-parent families, the proportion of children whose mothers or fathers are highly involved in their schools increases as their parents' education level increases. Among children living in two-parent families, 31 percent have mothers who are highly involved in their schools if their mothers have less than a high school education, while 70 percent have highly involved mothers if their mothers have graduate or professional school experience. Similarly, 10 percent of children in two-parent families whose fathers have less than a high school education have highly involved fathers, while 41 percent whose fathers have graduate or professional school experience have highly involved fathers.

Children are also more likely to have mothers' and fathers' who are highly involved in their schools as household income increases. Sixty-eight percent of children living in two-parent families with household incomes over \$75,000 have highly involved mothers compared to 42 percent in households earning less than \$25,000 (table 1).

**Children whose mothers and fathers are highly involved in their schools are more likely to have greater levels of "social capital" as measured by activities shared with parents and high parental educational expectations.**

It is not only measures of socioeconomic status that are linked to mothers' and fathers' involvement in school. Children whose

mothers and fathers are highly involved in their schools are more apt to have families that share activities with them such as reading stories or visiting the library with them or who expect that they will graduate from a 4-year college (table 2).

## Discussion

Most children in elementary school have parents who are involved in their schools, but by the time children reach high school a much smaller proportion have parents who remain highly involved in their schools. Although part of the decrease is attributable to schools offering parents fewer opportunities for involvement, parents too are stepping back as their children grow older. Research suggests, however, that adolescents benefit when their parents are involved (U.S. Department of Education, 1997).

Children who are advantaged in terms of parental education and household income are more likely than other children to have parents who are highly involved in their schools. Furthermore, children who have highly involved parents are also generally more likely to share activities with them and to have parents who have high educational aspirations for them.

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- U.S. Department of Education. (1994). *Strong Families, Strong Schools: Building Community Partnerships for Learning*. Washington, DC.

**Table 2.—Percent of children with selected sources of social capital, by level of parental involvement<sup>1</sup> in their schools and family type: Students in grades K–12, 1996**

	Two-parent families				Single-parent families			
	Mother		Father		Mother		Father	
	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High
In the past week, someone in the family <sup>2</sup> ...								
told child a story	55	72	64	74	58	72	71	71
worked on a project with child	53	70	60	72	47	65	66	64
In the past month, someone visited <sup>2</sup> ...								
the library with child	32	59	44	62	26	52	32	47
a museum or historical site with child	11	25	15	29	13	24	9	26
Parent expects youth will graduate from a 4-year college <sup>3</sup>	75	91	79	92	72	87	56	90

<sup>1</sup> Low involvement is participation in none or only one activity. High involvement is participation in three or four activities.

<sup>2</sup> Children in Kindergarten - 5<sup>th</sup> grade.

<sup>3</sup> Students in 6<sup>th</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup> grade.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 1996 National Household Education Survey.

Issue Briefs present information on education topics of current interest. All estimates shown are based on samples and are subject to sampling variability. All differences discussed are statistically significant at the .05 level. In the design, conduct, and data processing of NCES surveys, efforts are made to minimize the effects of nonsampling errors, such as item nonresponse, measurement error, data processing error, or other systematic error. For additional details on NHES:96 data collection methods and definitions, see U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (1997). *National Household Education Survey of 1996: Data File User's Manual*, Vol. 1, NCES 97-425, by Mary A. Collins et al. Washington, DC.

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ISSUE  
BRIEF

April 1998

# How Involved Are Fathers in Their Children's Schools?

Until recently, fathers were the hidden parent in research on children's well-being. Their importance to children's financial well-being was widely accepted, but their contribution to other aspects of children's development was often assumed to be secondary to that of mothers and was not usually examined. Reflecting this bias in research on child development, many federal agencies, and programs dealing with family issues focused almost exclusively on mothers and their children. In 1995, President Clinton issued a memorandum requesting that all executive departments and agencies make a concerted effort to include fathers in their programs, policies, and research programs where appropriate and feasible (Clinton, 1995). This new attention devoted to fathers is not intended to lessen the focus on the important role that mothers play in their children's lives, but rather to highlight the fact that fathers are important too.

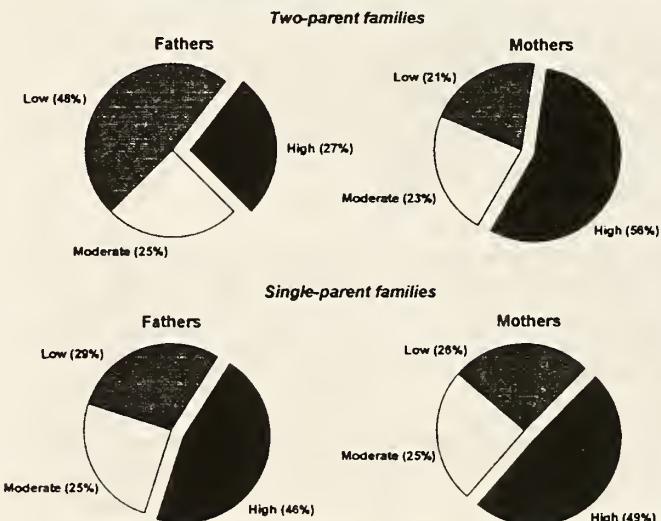
Research stimulated by the new interest in fathers suggests that fathers' involvement in their children's schools does make a difference in their children's education (U.S. Department of Education, 1997). This issue brief looks at the extent to which fathers are involved in their kindergartners' through 12th graders' schools using data from the 1996 National Household Education Survey (NHES:96), sponsored by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). The involvement of fathers in two-parent and in father-only families is presented and contrasted with that of mothers in two-parent and in mother-only families.<sup>1</sup>

The NHES:96 asked about four types of school activities that parents could participate in during the school year: attending a general school meeting, attending a regularly scheduled parent-teacher conference, attending a school or class event, and serving as a volunteer at the school. Parents are said to have low involvement in their children's schools if they have done none or only one of the four activities during the current school year. They are categorized as having moderate involvement if they have done two of the activities. Those who have participated in three or four of the activities are said to be highly involved in their children's schools.<sup>2</sup>

Fathers in two-parent families are less likely than mothers in two-parent families to be highly involved in their children's schools. Indeed, many fathers in two-parent families are relatively uninvolved in their children's schools.

The proportion of children living in two-parent families with highly involved fathers is about half of the proportion with highly involved mothers, 27 percent and 56 percent, respectively (figure 1). Nearly half of children in two-parent families have fathers who participated in none or only one of the four activities since the beginning of the school year. In contrast, only 21 percent of children living in two-parent families have mothers with such low participation in their schools.

Figure 1.—Level of fathers' and mothers' involvement\* in school, by family type: Students in grades K-12, 1996



\*Low involvement is participation in none or only one activity; moderate involvement is participation in two activities; and high involvement is participation in three or four activities.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 1996 National Household Education Survey.

<sup>1</sup> The analyses are restricted to children living with biological, step, or adoptive fathers. Children living with foster fathers are excluded.

<sup>2</sup> Not all schools offer parents the opportunity to be involved in each of these activities. Low involvement can result because parents do not take advantage of available opportunities for involvement or because schools do not offer them opportunities for involvement.

Fathers and mothers who head single-parent families are virtually identical in their level of involvement in their children's schools. Their level of involvement, in fact, is quite similar to mothers in two-parent families.

Children living with single fathers or with single mothers are about equally likely to have parents who are highly involved in their schools, 46 percent and 49 percent, respectively. Both fathers and mothers who head single-parent families have levels of involvement in their children's schools that are quite similar to mothers in two-parent families and are much higher than fathers in two-parent families.

Fathers in two-parent families are more likely to attend school or class events or general school meetings than they are to attend parent-teacher conferences or to volunteer at their children's schools.

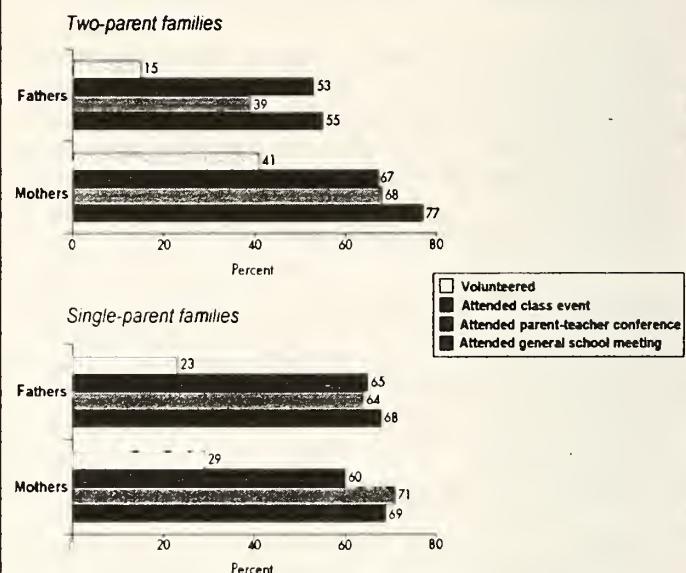
In two-parent families, there are two activities for which fathers' involvement approaches that of mothers: attendance at school or class events (such as a play, science fair, or sports event) and attendance at general school meetings (figure 2). Fathers may find it easier to attend these types of activities because they are more likely than the other two to occur during non-school and non-work hours. Fathers in father-only families are more likely than fathers in two-parent families to participate in these and other activities, so work constraints are not the sole explanation for low involvement among fathers in two-parent families.

## Discussion

The observed patterns of fathers' involvement in their children's schools by family structure are consistent with existing research (Cooksey and Fondell, 1996) and with the notion that there is a division of labor in two-parent families, with mothers taking more responsibility for child-related tasks, whereas in single-parent families the lone parent assumes the responsibility. Fathers and mothers in two-parent families may be operating under the mistaken assumption that fathers do not matter as much as mothers when it comes to involvement in their children's school. The results also support research which finds that single fathers and mothers are more similar in their parenting behavior than are mothers and fathers in two-parent families (Thomson, McLanahan, and Curtin, 1992).

The low participation of fathers in two-parent families offers schools an opportunity to increase overall parental involvement. By targeting fathers, schools may be able to make greater gains in parental involvement than by targeting mothers or parents, in general. This is not to say that schools should not continue to welcome mothers' involvement. But, because mothers already exhibit relatively high levels of participation in their children's schools, there is less room to increase their involvement. Moreover, increasing fathers' involvement is likely to help children do better in school (U.S. Department of Education, 1997).

**Figure 2.—Percent of children whose fathers and mothers participated in each school activity, by family type: Students in grades K-12, 1996**



SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 1996 National Household Education Survey.

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ISSUE  
BRIEF

June 1998

Nonresident Fathers Can Make a  
Difference in Children's School Performance

**B**ecause of the high rates of non-marital childbearing, separation, and divorce in the United States, as many as half of U.S. children will spend part of their childhood living apart from at least one of their parents, usually their fathers (Zill, 1996; Furstenberg and Cherlin, 1991). Research on the salience of nonresident fathers to children's lives consistently finds that their payment of child support is important to children's well-being. Such research, however, is more mixed about the benefits of their continued contact and involvement for children (Kelly, 1993; Furstenberg and Cherlin, 1991).

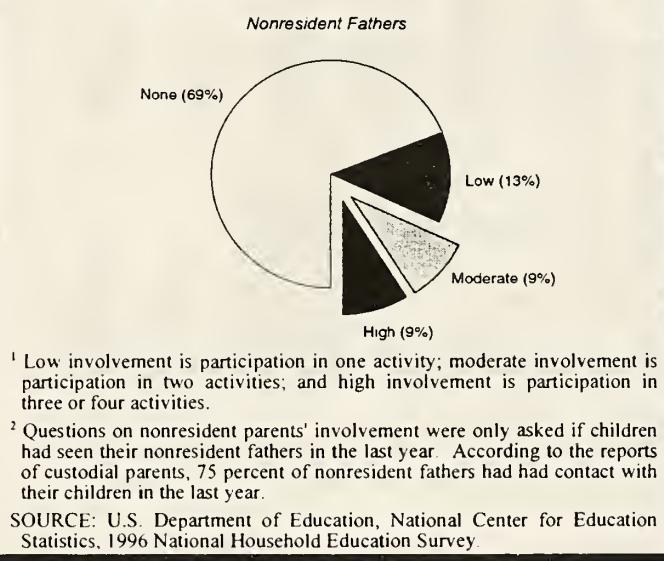
This issue brief looks at the involvement of nonresident fathers in one important area of children's lives—their schools. Using data from the 1996 National Household Education Survey (NHES:96), sponsored by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), it examines the extent to which nonresident fathers are involved in their kindergartners' through 12th graders' schools and whether their involvement is linked to children's school performance.

The NHES:96 asked about four types of school activities that parents could participate in during the school year: attending a general school meeting, attending a regularly scheduled parent-teacher conference, attending a school or class event, and serving as a volunteer at the school. Resident parents reported on whether nonresident parents who had had contact with their children in the past year had participated in these activities. Nonresident fathers are said to have no involvement in their children's schools if they have participated in none of the activities during the current school year. They are said to have low involvement if they have participated in only one of the four activities. They are categorized as having moderate involvement if they have done two of the activities. Those who have participated in three or four of the activities are said to be highly involved in their children's schools.<sup>1</sup>

Most nonresident fathers are not very involved in their children's schools.

Sixty-nine percent of children in kindergarten through 12th grade who have seen their nonresident fathers in the past year have fathers who participated in none of the four school activities (figure 1). An additional 13 percent of children have nonresident fathers who participated in only one activity. However, eighteen percent of children have nonresident fathers who participated in at least two of the school activities and 9 percent have nonresident fathers who participated in three or four of the activities.

Figure 1.—Level of involvement<sup>1</sup> in school of nonresident fathers who have seen their children within the last year<sup>2</sup>: Students in grades K–12, 1996



<sup>1</sup> Low involvement is participation in one activity; moderate involvement is participation in two activities; and high involvement is participation in three or four activities.

<sup>2</sup> Questions on nonresident parents' involvement were only asked if children had seen their nonresident fathers in the last year. According to the reports of custodial parents, 75 percent of nonresident fathers had had contact with their children in the last year.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 1996 National Household Education Survey.

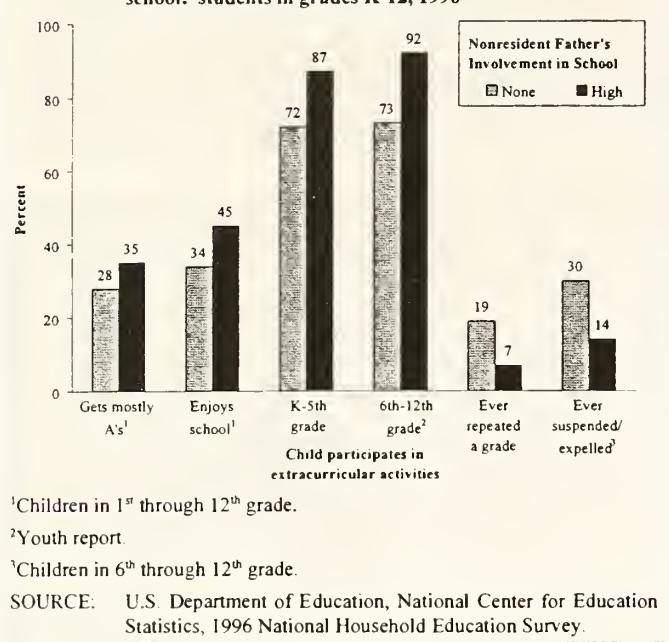
Children are less likely to have ever repeated a grade or been suspended or expelled if their nonresident fathers are involved in their schools.

Children in kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade are about one-third as likely to have ever repeated a grade if their nonresident fathers are highly involved in their schools (7 percent) than if their nonresident fathers are not involved in their schools (19 percent) (figure 2). Similarly, 6<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> graders are half as likely to have ever been suspended or expelled if their nonresident fathers are highly involved in their schools (14 percent) than if their nonresident fathers are

<sup>1</sup> Not all schools offer parents the opportunity to be involved in each of these activities. Low involvement can result because parents do not take advantage of available opportunities for involvement or because schools do not offer them opportunities for involvement.

not involved (30 percent). Even after controlling for such factors as the child's race-ethnicity and sex, the resident mother/guardian's education, household income, family type (stepparent, mother only, or neither parent in household), and whether the nonresident father paid any child support, children are less likely to have ever repeated a grade or been suspended or expelled if their nonresident fathers are involved in their schools (U.S. Department of Education, 1997).

**Figure 2.— Student outcomes, by nonresident fathers' involvement in school: students in grades K-12, 1996**



**Children are more likely to get A's in school, to enjoy school, and to participate in extracurricular activities if their nonresident fathers are involved in their schools.**

Roughly a third of students get mostly A's if their fathers are highly involved in their schools (35 percent) compared to just over one-quarter if their nonresident fathers are not involved (28 percent) (figure 2). Children also enjoy school more and are more likely to participate in extracurricular activities if their nonresident fathers are highly involved in their schools compared to if they are not involved.

Forty-five percent of children whose nonresident fathers are highly involved in their schools are said to enjoy school compared to 34 percent whose nonresident fathers are involved. Similarly, 87 percent of kindergarten through 5<sup>th</sup> graders and 92 percent of 6<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> graders whose nonresident fathers are involved in their schools participate in extracurricular activities compared to 72 percent of kindergarten through 5<sup>th</sup> graders and 73 percent of 6<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> graders whose nonresident fathers are not involved in their schools. Even after controlling for the child's race-ethnicity and sex, the resident mother/guardian's education, household income, family type, and whether the nonresident father paid any child support, children are more likely to get mostly A's, to enjoy school, and to participate in extracurricular activities if their nonresident fathers are involved in their schools than if they are not (U.S. Department of Education, 1997).

## Discussion

Nonresident fathers' participation in school activities makes a difference in their children's school performance. Inconsistencies about the benefits of nonresident fathers' continued involvement with their children in extant studies may be due in large part to the fact that contact is often used to measure involvement. These results show that it is not contact, per se, that is associated with improved student outcomes, but rather active participation in children's lives through involvement in their schools that makes a difference. The majority of nonresident fathers, however, are not involved in their children's schools.

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ISSUE  
BRIEF

April 1998

## Students Do Better When Their Fathers Are Involved at School

Policymakers and educators agree that family involvement in children's education is closely linked to children's school success (U.S. Department of Education, 1994; Henderson and Berla, 1994). Many policymakers, school officials, and families, however, often assume that family involvement means *mothers'* involvement in schools is important. This assumption has some basis in truth in that mothers are more likely than fathers to be highly involved in their children's schools, and the extent of their involvement is strongly related to children's school performance and adjustment (U.S. Department of Education, 1997). An important question, however, is does fathers' involvement matter, as well? In two-parent households, do fathers make a contribution over and above that made by mothers? And, in single-parent households headed by a father, does fathers' involvement in children's schools make a difference to children's performance in school?

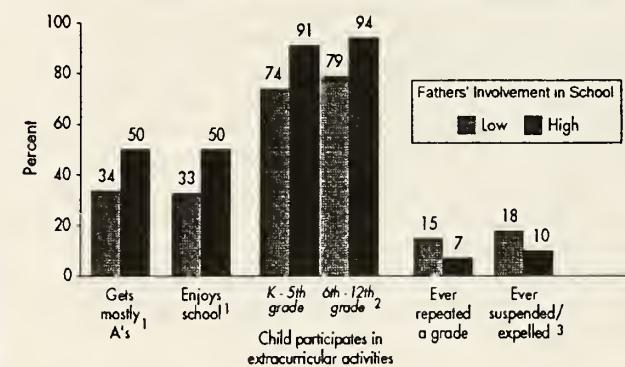
This issue brief looks at the link between fathers' involvement in their children's schools and kindergartners through 12th graders' school performance using data from the 1996 National Household Education Survey (NHES:96), sponsored by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). Information is presented for children living in two-parent and in father-only households.<sup>1</sup>

The NHES:96 asked about four types of school activities that parents could participate in during the school year: attending a general school meeting, attending a regularly scheduled parent-teacher conference, attending a school or class event, and serving as a volunteer at the school. Fathers are said to have low involvement in their children's schools if they have done none or only one of the four activities during the current school year. They are categorized as having moderate involvement if they have done two of the activities. Those who have participated in three or four of the activities are said to be highly involved in their children's schools.<sup>2</sup>

In two-parent households, children are more likely to do well academically, to participate in extracurricular activities, and to enjoy school and are less likely to have ever repeated a grade or to have been suspended or expelled if their fathers have high as opposed to low involvement in their schools.

Half of students get mostly A's and enjoy school according to their parents when their fathers are highly involved in their schools compared to about one-third of students when their fathers have low levels of involvement (figure 1). Students are also half as likely to have ever repeated a grade (7 percent versus 15 percent) and are significantly less likely to have ever been suspended or expelled (10 percent versus 18 percent) if their fathers have high as opposed to low involvement in their schools.

Figure 1.—Student outcomes, by fathers' involvement in school: Students in grades K-12 in two-parent households, 1996



<sup>1</sup> Children in 1<sup>st</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grade.

<sup>2</sup> Youth report.

<sup>3</sup> Children in 6<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grade.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 1996 National Household Education Survey

After taking into account such factors as mothers' involvement, fathers' and mothers' education, household income, and children's race-ethnicity, children are still more likely to get A's, to participate in extracurricular activities, and to enjoy school and are less likely to have ever repeated a grade if their fathers are involved in their schools compared to if they are not (U.S. Department of Education, 1997).

<sup>1</sup> The analyses are restricted to children living with biological, step, or adoptive fathers. Children living with foster fathers are excluded.

<sup>2</sup> Not all schools offer parents the opportunity to be involved in each of these activities. Low involvement can result because parents do not take advantage of available opportunities for involvement or because schools do not offer them opportunities for involvement.

After taking into account these other factors, mothers' involvement, but not fathers' involvement, is associated with a reduced likelihood of 6th through 12th graders having ever been suspended or expelled.

In father-only households, children are more likely to do well in school, to participate in extracurricular activities, and to enjoy school and are less likely to have ever been suspended or expelled if their fathers have high as opposed to low levels of involvement in their schools.

Children living in single-parent households are, on average, less successful in school and experience more behavior problems than children living in two-parent households (McLanahan and Sandefur, 1994). Most research on single-parenthood focuses on children living with single mothers. As is apparent by comparing figures 1 and 2, however, children living in father-only households also do less well in school than children living in two-parent households.

Figure 2 also reveals that children in father-only households do better in school, are more likely to participate in extracurricular activities, enjoy school more, and are less likely to have ever been suspended or expelled if their fathers are highly involved in their schools compared to if they have only low levels of involvement. Nearly one-third of students get mostly A's when their fathers are highly involved in their schools compared to 17 percent when their fathers have low levels of involvement in their schools. Even more striking, only 11 percent of 6th through 12th graders have ever been suspended or expelled when their fathers have high levels of involvement in their schools compared to 34 percent when their fathers have low levels of involvement in their schools. Although a similar pattern is observed for grade repetition, the difference between children whose fathers have high and low levels of involvement is not statistically significant.

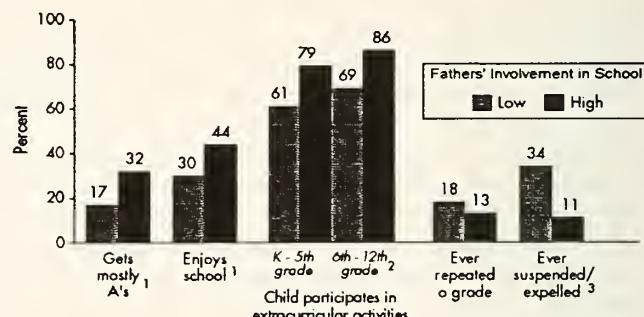
Even after controlling for such factors as fathers' education, family income, and children's race-ethnicity, children do better in school and are less likely to have ever been suspended or expelled if their fathers have high as opposed to low levels of involvement in their schools.

## Discussion

The involvement of fathers in their children's schools is important for children's achievement and behavior. In two-parent households, fathers' involvement in their children's schools has a distinct and independent influence on children's achievement over and above that of mothers.

These results show that fathers can be a positive force in their children's education, and when they do get involved, their children are likely to do better in school. Unfortunately, many fathers are relatively uninvolved in their children's schools (U.S. Department of Education, 1997). These results should encourage fathers to become more involved in their children's schools and encourage schools to welcome fathers' involvement.

Figure 2.—Student outcomes, by fathers' involvement in school: Students in grades K-12 in father-only households, 1996



<sup>1</sup> Children in 1<sup>st</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grade.

<sup>2</sup> Youth report.

<sup>3</sup> Children in 6<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grade.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 1996 National Household Education Survey

## References and Related Publications

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This Issue Brief was prepared by Christine Winquist Nord of Westat. To obtain standard errors or definitions of terms for this Issue Brief, or to obtain additional information about the National Household Education Survey, contact Jerry West (202) 219-1574. To order additional copies of this Issue Brief or other NCES publications, call 1-800-424-1616. NCES publications are available on the Internet at <http://NCES.ed.gov>.



